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FREE THOUGHTS

UPON

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FAITH:

OR THE

RELIGION OF NATURE.

A

POEM,

WITH NOTES.



PRINTED IN THE YEAR, M.DCC.LVIII.

THEE THOUGH

F A I H

OR THE

RELIGION OF NATURE

THEOLOGY

WITH NOTES



PRINTED BY THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE



ADVERTISEMENT.



HIS POEM was published by the Author in 1746. The Subject is important ; the Sentiments just, and strong ; the Images beautiful, and natural. Yet, in the Train of Reasoning, a certain Connection seemed to be wanting : In the Sentiments, *clearness*, and *perspicuity* ; and in the Images, *sameness*, and *simplicity*. Mixt Metaphor also was sometimes admitted ; and the Style, tho' strong, yet in some Places appeared too harsh and rough. These small Imperfections, in a WORK of such Genius and Spirit, and so worthy of Esteem, seemed to require Amendment. This is now attempted, in a Manner,

'tis

'tis hoped, which would not have offended the excellent Author, if he were still living; nor will it therefore offend his Friends, who since his Death have published his WORKS.



FREE



FREE THOUGHTS, &c.

O THOU! in whom we live and move, supreme
 ESSENCE! whom neither Time nor Space can
 bound;

Fatal Existence, join'd with steadfast WILL:

In search of whom Imagination fails,

And Thought rolls back on Darkneſs! CAUSE uncaus'd! 5

Progreſſive Unbeginner without End!

What haſt thou interpos'd to hide thyſelf;

Yet, ſecret, make us ſee the pictur'd Ground

Of Being, Life, and Senſe, and Mind, and Will,

And all the ſacred Wonders of thy World! 10

The Poem begins with a ſolemn Addreſs and Invocation of the DEITY; and after acknowledging the Incapacity of MAN to comprehend the Nature of GOD, as he is in himſelf, the Author refers to his WORKS, which exhibit a Representation of his Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs: from which Manifeſtation, or Revelation, we derive all that we believe, or know with Certainty concerning him. This Attempt to explain our Belief, or Knowledge of GOD, he begins with that Humility, Reverence, and Reſignation, which becomes Man, when he ſeeks to know, or endeavours to explain the WILL, or LAW of his MAKER.

PARENT of LIGHT, and TRUTH ! O, while my Soul,
 Thy Gift, receives, and feels, and owns thy Pow'r ;
 And thro' the Shades, that veil thy Brightness round,
 Seeks thee desiring ; O conduct me safe,
 To stem one transient, momentary Glance 15
 Of thy keen Light and live !—But in thy Works,
 As in a Glass reflected, oft' I view
 Thy Pow'r, thy Wisdom, and thy Goodness join'd,
 With grateful Adoration fill'd ! still grant
 Thy gracious Favour, and inspiring lead 20
 Me blameless in thy Ways ! O THOU, who know'st
 The Muse's conscious Reverence, aid my Song !

Awfully shrinking from the SNAKY ROD
 That marks thy Place, assumes thy Pow'r, and wrecks
 Thy

(23.) He next proceeds to censure those Notions as chimerical, which are built on any other Foundation, than on NATURE.—These Notions have been woven into artificial Systems, no ways conformable to the Order of NATURE ; consequently, instead of a true and faithful Representation of the WILL, or LAW of GOD, they exhibit only the chimerical and arbitrary WILL of MAN. They are derived either from Pride and Arrogance, which are the Sources of FANATICISM, and false ENTHUSIASM ; or from Fear and Ignorance, which are the Sources of Superstition ; or from a Mixture of all these with a LITTLE TRUTH, which produces Bigotry. The Consequence is, that Mankind, under this ill Direction, acquires a false Humility, and unnatural Debasement, to fear without Cause of Fear, to hope without Cause of Hope, and to love and hate without Regard of Truth and Falshood, of Virtue and Vice, those natural marks which God has fixed on Things, to make them lovely or hateful.

“ SNAKY

Thy pointed Vengeance, or directs thy WILL, 25
 I start, astonish'd at the bold Pretence !
 Benevolent CREATOR ! whence aspires
 Ambitious Man's brief Glance of shadowy Life
 To launch his little Plummets into Depths
 Of dark Eternity, and boldly build 30
 Worlds for his Maker's Vengeance ! how presume
 O'erweening Mole-blind Furrowers of dull Earth,
 Contracting in themselves their God's whole Care,
 T' arrest the Radiance of his LIGHT and TRUTH ?

Why

" SNAKY ROD." This Epithet comprehends a great deal. It perfectly characterises the Genius of Imposture, by which Superstition has been woven into a System so mysterious, that even MOSES, the *Hebrew* Lawgiver, whose Design was to reveal that Mystery, and to counteract its Influence, hath yet been drawn to co-operate with it. His Design was evidently directed to establish a System of pure THEISM, and with that, a State of rational, or perfect FREEDOM, as a Consequence of TRUTH, in Opposition to Superstition and the Consequences of it, Tyranny and Bondage. The great OUTLINES of his Plan prove this noble Truth most evidently. These, it must be confess'd some Way or other, have been fill'd up grossly enough. They have escap'd however, the Touch of Corruption. This is indeed a great, and real Blessing : how they have escaped, is a great, and real Miracle. But Fraud, in concealing itself, always leaves some Part uncover'd ; like the Ostrich, who, when he is pursued, by hiding his Head only, thinks he conceals his Body. The Absurdities, the Inconsistencies, and the Contradictions, which have been added to his Plan, are also plain. They are easily separated and rejected : since it is impossible that both cou'd be designed, or dictated by the same Person : and that,

Why from his Goodness excommunicate 35
 Numberless Orbs as illegitimate
 Outcasts, or Fugitives of Heav'n to waste
 Partial Prerogative on this gross Ball,
 That daily rolling, turns its eyeless Bulk,
 To beg Life's needful Alms from one kind SUN ; 40
 While Worlds superior to Conception's Bound,
 Attracting and attracted, roll their Orbs
 In measur'd Time, thro' boundless Seas of Light,
 And SUNS unnumber'd pour unfailing Day ?

Require

in the noblest Design, either a good Man shou'd use Imposture,
 or a wise Man admit such Contradictions, as wou'd not only
 corrupt, but in Effect, absolutely destroy it. All Objections
 therefore against these Contradictions are admitted ; but when
 these are removed, the Objections are removed too. But Ob-
 jections yet remain against the very Plan and real Design of
Moses. These Objections, and the Defense made by Reli-
 gionists, are both founded in the same Mistake. The FALL of
 MAN seems to be entirely misunderstood by both ; according to
 which fundamental Mistake, the Objections are undoubtedly
 unanswerable. I shall endeavour, therefore, to explain this
 important Subject in a Treatise concerning the Life of MOSES.
 Mean time the following Hint,* perhaps may assist those, who
 are willing to try their own Conjectures. There is no Difficulty,
 no Obscurity ; the whole Process is plain and obvious : he can
 scarce miss seeing it, whoever understands the Genius of My-
 thology, the Similitudes, and Analogies of NATURE, and the
Egyptian Art of Application. These Similitudes are applied by

* ΠΕΛΛΑΙΟΣ ΔΡΑΚΩΝ. See p. 12 and 16. Notes.

Require not these vast Works of God, God's Grace, 45
 Proportion'd to their Vastness ? How then dares
 Conceit's proud Preference of its own clay'd Cott
 O'erleap those Azure Fields, where Thought, and Space,
 And Number, and Immensity are lost,
 And Comprehension akes to scale Repulse ! 50
 Whence then Man's reptile Arrogance of Guests,
 Such impudent out-starting, to presume
 His unavailing Fondness, and vain Pride
 Cou'd lead, task, limit and confine his God !

MOSES with a beautiful Plainness and Simplicity ; and this very Plainness, perhaps, has conceal'd his Design : while some in all the Pride of false Knowledge, and vain Philosophy, can see Nothing but supernatural Mystery, and others, intangled in their own Cunning, Nothing which does not promote their Interest. And ev'n Writers of the freest Genius, and greatest Capacity, seem not wholly to have comprehended this Mystery. Dr. MIDDLETON saw it was an Allegory : Lord BOLINGBROKE calls it a moral, philosophical, *Ægyptian* Allegory : * but they saw no more.

Divines have run the ERROR of the FALL into Christianity. Mystery is employ'd to explain Mystery ; and the Revelation of a Mystery, and the Explanation of that Revelation become yet more mysterious : till by these Means natural Theology is quite absorbed in artificial ; the WORKS, the WILL, the LAW of GOD unseen, and the WILL of MAN arbitrarily substituted. The Consequence is plain : VICE, SUPERSTITION, ATHEISM, TYRANNY.

* The honest and learned M. BUNCLE calls the *Mosaical* Institution, Christianity in Hieroglyphicks. This approaches still nearer to Truth ; but wants yet a more full Explication.

Say,

Say, Bigot Boasters of unmanner'd Zeal, 55
 Ye who are impudently sure of GRACE,
 Religion's Pirates, who take Heav'n by Force !
 And, covering Madness with the Name of FAITH,
 Sin deepest, where most sanctified ! weigh, pause ;
 THINK !—Answer not from Custom's dull Assent, 60
 But the try'd Soul's true Test, sure felt within !
 Is it in Revelation's awful Claim
 That ye should thus misplead th' ALMIGHTY'S WILL
 To falsify his JUSTICE ! dare Men boast

Divine

(55.) *Alexander the Great* is stiled by the Satirist—*Felix Terrarum PRÆDO*.—In Religion the same Species of Madness, or errant Heroism has prevailed.—When Men, under Pretence of FAITH in imputed Righteousness, are made to believe that Happiness is insur'd to Vice, they run blindly into a Sort of arrogant Pride, Scorn, and Abhorrence of VIRTUE, when it is express'd in the Characters of Men, whose FAITH (as they call it) is not orthodox. This unnatural Passion of religious Malevolence is noted by the Word Bigotry ; and constitutes a Character the most opposite to Truth, Virtue and Christianity. It was that very Species of Madness, which prevailed among the Jews, when they are said “ to take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force ; ” that very Madness, which made them hate, vilify and murder their great Reformer : and that very Species of Madness, which makes ev'n those, who pretend to be his Disciples, counteract his Doctrine, and hate, vilify and persecute all who are his real Disciples ; all, who, like him, are Lovers of TRUTH and VIRTUE, that is, perfect THEISTS.

(63) When Religionists absurdly misplead the WILL of GOD in Defence of Actions unjust, cruel and malevolent, they absolutely destroy the Idea or Notion of a DEITY ; and while they pretend to reveal his WILL, act in plain Confederacy with Atheists, who deny

Divine Legation, who contemptuous bind 55
 Th' all gladdening Lord of all yon' wid'ning Worlds,
 To one poor partial Care of one poor Part
 Of one poor Corner of one World's poor CLAN?
 —Out with this Avarice of fanatic Scrape,
 That pinching to itself God's nibbled Grants 70
 Hedg'd in th' ETERNAL'S COMMON! selfish PRIDE
 Forestall'd all Power of opening Mystery's Gate,
 For its own pick-lock Tribe unkey'd by Heav'n.
 Why, if enlightened most, shou'd WILL most dark

Bid

deny it. It seems probable that this latter Species of Madness is only the former a little extended, and that ATHEISM is Superstition at full growth.

(71.) TRUTH, 'tis presum'd, is the COMMON RIGHT of Mankind; how then dares any Man pretend a sole Right, or Commission to understand, or teach it? They who understand it best, and are therefore best qualified to teach it, are certainly least apt to make a claim so foolishly arrogant, and at the same time so pernicious to the Freedom, Peace and Happiness of Mankind.

(73—75.) And why, if any are indeed commission'd to reveal the WILL of GOD to guide Mankind in Truth, Virtue and Happiness, do they yet conceal that WILL by revealing it so darkly, that the Revelation itself is a Mystery? Certainly a wise Man for his own Sake, and a good Man for the Sake of others, wou'd act more generously. If they wou'd teach the Art of seeing and recognizing the WILL of GOD from his Works, without Imposture or Falsification, they wou'd be wise and good indeed, while they thus acted a Part truly honourable to themselves and beneficial to Mankind. It was the Objection of PORPHYRY to MOSES, that he “represented God as a Being, who envied Mankind the “Knowledge of Truth:” παντως φθονεως ἀπηγορευθη, ΦΘΟΝΟΤΗΤΟΣ ΤΗ ΘΕΟΥ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙΣ ΤΗ ΓΝΩΣΕΩΣ.—That famous Philosopher,

Bid these few favourite hand-led Spies of Grace, 75
 Conceal from modest Doubt their ART to KNOW ?
 Why,

Philosopher, if he pleased, might have objected this to his own Religion. It is said of APOLLO, and of his Priests, (who yet, more than the rest of that Sort, favour'd, and indulg'd the Freedom of WIT and REASON) " that they neither told, nor conceal'd their Meaning; but made SIGNS." οὐδὲ λέγει, οὐδὲ κρυπτει, ἀλλὰ ΣΕΜΑΙΝΕΙ. In the earliest Times, before Language was completely form'd by Use, and extended to comprehend and express all external Impressions, or Ideas of Things, the Things themselves were frequently employ'd, either by Action or Representation, and according to their various Agreements, and Similitudes, substituted for each other. This Substitution was a SIGN. Afterwards, when Language was form'd, the Use and Application of it was yet, even among the few, who understood it, deem'd an Accomplishment little inferior to Inspiration; and still more, when by the Invention and Use of Letters, those Sounds or Words were express'd, was it esteem'd a Sort of MIRACLE. Hence WORD and REASON became Equivalents in the *Greek* Language, among a People ever curious and inquisitive, who under the Influence of Freedom, and a happy Genius, made such a Progress in Arts and Sciences, as even at this Time is beheld with Admiration. Yet even among them there was a Time, when Language was reckon'd among the greatest Accomplishments, and writing was a sacred Thing. And indeed this latter notion extends even to our own Times, among whom, tho' Books are so common, that the Impressions of Novelty, wonder and Authority, are now no longer connected with them, yet by the Vulgar these Impressions and Connexions are yet retained, in whose Opinion nothing more is wanted to realize and verify a Fact, than to find it written in a Book.— Such however was the slow Progression of Knowledge, both by
 SIGNS

(II)

Why, if possess'd of some eductive Clue
That shews lost Diffidence Truth's lucid Ray,

Claim

SIGNS and WORDS, that while it depended on the Veracity and Ability of those, who used them, either to instruct, or to be instructed, both ways of advancing it have been always liable to Obstructions and Impediments from Obscurity, Ambiguity and Error. As to SIGNS, though among the Antients, as well as now, there were Men of mean Genius, and selfish Passions, who wou'd sometimes abuse them, either insignificantly, or deceitfully, yet by the great Legislators, and in capital Points, they are always employ'd to convey a wise and good Meaning: for this is a great Truth, that the Antients were no FOOLS. Signs in some Cases may be used with equal Exactness and Precision, and even with greater Propriety, Force and Vivacity of Impression, than Words. They have moreover this Advantage, that by seeming to conceal Truth, or rather by a middle Way between hiding and revealing, and either by a modest Reserve, or by a graceful manner of Discovery, they excite Curiosity, engage Attention, and establish and preserve, from the Indifference of too much Familiarity, those original Impressions, which belong to it, of Novelty, Admiration, and Authority. And hence by the *Aegyptians* they were appropriated to Religion, and termed SACRED LETTERS. We ought not therefore in our Interpretations of those mythical Allegories, or HOLY WRIT, to be too hasty in dogmatizing, or in fixing and restraining them to a single determinate Meaning; for though even that may sometimes be done with great Beauty and Propriety, yet as they are of a copious Invention, and fruitful of various Meanings, such a Restraining, and precision, seems rather to be a Retrenchment of their Abundance, than an Addition to their Strength. Here the Imagination and Reason should be left free and unrestrain'd: the more they are exercised, the greater and better will be the
En-

Claim they Consent implicit ? why subject
Belief to bold Assumption ? Tasteless FAITH

80
Dis-

Entertainment, and Instruction ; especially if sufficient Caution be applied in excluding all Absurdity, Inconsistency and Contradiction. The Antients drew immediately from NATURE. They did not attempt to form, connect and harmonize chimerical, fantastical, and supernatural Imaginations, which, like Dreams, or fleeting Clouds, are too slippery and evanescent, to be reduc'd to a stable Form, or to preserve Connexion, and Proportion. This is said only of those, who had Genius and Ability. It is said, and may be prov'd of *Moses*. That Lawgiver did not conceal his "ART to KNOW." It was his Design, in reforming from *Egyptian* Superstition to reveal, that which they affected to conceal ; and to reject that, which they affected to publish. But when afterwards, false Knowledge and chimerical Notions were employ'd to interpret and explain his Design, which was wholly drawn from the Agreements and Similarities of Nature, the Consequence has been seen in a System deform'd with Absurdity, Inconsistency and Contradiction, and felt in the Effects of Superstition, Fanaticism, and Bigotry ; by which that Design hath not only been corrupted, but even subverted, and destroyed. There is no other Way to attain a real Knowledge, and true Feeling of the WILL or Law of GOD, than by a modest, sober, and careful Examination of his WORKS, a diligent Attention, and Observation of NATURE, and a faithful Report, or Representation of it. The Mind of Man will gradually conform, and harmonize itself to this Knowledge, by customary Impressions ; and the Opinions, Sentiments, and Manners will all follow in a natural Order, and regular Progression, agreeable to the providential State and Course of Things, and to the various Relations and Connexions of human Dependence. They who seek the WILL of GOD in any other Way, will for ever wander in Error, deceiving and deceived : and they who pretend to teach it in any other Way, are "BLIND LEADERS of the BLIND."

NATURE

Dishonours where it worships. Heav'n disdains
Obedience from the Blind : and every Sect
Were orthodox, if to believe be Proof.

Of

NATURE only points the Way, and marks the Road, which leads to Truth, to Virtue, and to Happiness, according to that common Doctrine of the old Philosophy : και οι φιλοσοφοι ΔΙΔΑΚΤΑ λεγουσι ΤΑ ΚΑΚΑ. ΦΤΣΙΚΑ δε ΤΑ ΑΓΑΘΑ. (This Rule is now inverted : and how can we be said to go right, when we don't even aim right ? I think it was BOILEAU, who observing NATURE to be well understood, and faithfully imitated by MO-LIERE, desir'd (as he said) to learn of him, " L'ART de la TROVER.

(77.) If these authorised or commissioned Teachers of TRUTH drew their Explanations from NATURE, such Explanations wou'd be proportion'd to human REASON, and the Sense of Duty or Obligation wou'd arise from the noblest Motives, and from that, which by the constitution of NATURE, and Appointment of GOD, is the RULER, or REGULATOR of them ; whereas, according to the System of artificial Religion, those Motives are derived either from HOPE and PRIDE, the vainest and most delusive, or from FEAR and CREDULITY, the basest and most servile Parts of human Nature. Hence the Effect, on one Hand, will always be IMPLICIT FAITH, not in GOD, (of whom by these Means, nothing can be known, but what wou'd unworthily be attributed even to MAN) but in those who pretend to be his inspir'd, or commission'd LEGATES, and EMBASSADORS. For HOPE and PRIDE, with Ignorance, are the Sources of FANATICISM, and FEAR and CREDULITY, with Ignorance, are the Sources of SUPERSTITION ; while a Mixture of all together produces BIGOTRY, the very worst and most poisonous Composition that ever was invented and prepar'd in the ecclesiastical College.* The Effects of it are described l. 87—91.

* Φαρμακα Πολλα λυγρα μεμιγμενα, πολλα μεν εσθλα.

Of't when I seek for Aid t' o'ercome Distrust,
Humbling imperious Reason, while I bend

85
With

(85.) "Imperious REASON," a proper Epithet for that Faculty which is the RULER, or REGULATOR, in the human Constitution. REASON is assur'd without Pride; conscious, without Affectation, and constant without Obstinacy: it claims Empire, not over other Minds, but over our own.

Sapiens sibi Imperiosus.

HOR.

I believe this ruling Principle, or Faculty of the Mind, which seems to distinguish Man from Man, as much as Man from Beast, whenever by Exercise and Discipline it rises to any Degree of Maturity and Perfection, is always accompanied with Modesty, and in searching the most sublime Truths relating to DEITY, with Humility and Resignation. To every ingenuous Mind therefore it must be equally grievous either to compell, or be compell'd. FAITH, when it signifies Belief, is either acquir'd by CUSTOM, or by REASON. When it is acquir'd by Custom, it arises from a frequent Repetition, or Continuation of the same, or similar Impressions made on the Mind, either by NATURE, or by ART. Both these Sorts of Belief are implicit, the first in GOD, the second in MAN. They both equally avoid and abhor Doubt, and Enquiry. Hence in the first Sort it happens that various Species of DEITY are exhibited to the Mind, according to its Capacity, and the Temperament of its Affections, and Passions; while the second receives Form and Fashion intirely from Authority, positive Institution, and arbitrary WILL. The former therefore is natural Superstition, the latter artificial; and while the one may be consider'd as the first rude Efforts of the Mind in Pursuit of TRUTH, the other is a false Direction of it. In one it fails through Weakness; in the other through Design. The first is MERE Superstition, the last MERE Imposture. It is plain therefore that both these Sorts of Belief are liable to much

Error:

With meek Attention to the Call of Truth,
Where the hir'd Sophister's rank Lust of Pow'r

Lewd

Error : the first by the Imperfection of our Minds ; the second by a wrong Direction or Application of those Imperfections, when by Craft they are woven into artificial Systems, and establish'd by Power and Force. When external Impressions, or Matters of Fact, are regulated and corrected according to the constant Course of Things, or Standard of NATURE, from whence they are derived ; the Belief, which before was merely customary and implicit, now becomes rational. The Proof rises above Doubt, and the Conclusion is Truth. This Regulation is made by an exact and careful Examination, and Recognition, of the true Power, or Moment of all those Faculties or Senses, which receive and convey natural Impressions to the Imagination. This Recognition is effected by Reason, the Corrector and Regulator of all the other Powers or Faculties of the Mind. Rational Belief therefore is founded in Evidence, and Evidence in NATURE. When this Evidence is seen, we assent consequently and necessarily. But if NATURE cannot be compell'd, neither can such Belief. Force may produce Hypocrisy, or Simulation ; Belief it cannot produce. And how can that therefore be deem'd fit to be done, which GOD has made impossible to be done ? It may be said, perhaps, that by a continual Effort even Impossibility may be surmounted. I believe, (saith St. AUSTIN) because it is IMPOSSIBLE." This indeed is a supernatural Reason ; he who can thus believe, may remove Mountains. The Mind thus strain'd becomes dissolute. When Force is thus offer'd to itself, the Transition is easy from the lowest Degree of servile Abasement to the highest Pitch of arrogant Pride. The Distance immediately vanishes between IMPLICIT FAITH and arbitrary Command ; and between arbitrary Command and persecuting RAGE. In reality they concur, and run into each other. He who can believe with *Austin*, will damn with *Athanasius*. Such it seems is the Genius of that FAITH, that whosoever be-

Lewd Fornication still commits with FAITH,
And chaste Religion stains with lawless Force :

Where

believeth not, without Doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Is not this an amiable Picture of human NATURE; No: 'Tis a Picture only of priestly Genius. It is that very Genius which hath corrupted human NATURE. It is that very SERPENTINE Genius which MOSES symbolically characteriz'd, and which JESUS condemn'd. Our Poet hath describ'd it again l. 81—91. If it be truly design'd, let them own it to whom it belongs. That Confession (more just than ever St. *Austin* made) wou'd make even SHAME meritorious. Mean time I ask leave to hope that a better Genius may prevail among those, who are authoris'd to instruct Mankind; and to wish, with a noble PHILOSOPHER,* whom yet, while they hate, they vainly attempt to imitate; that "it may be far, and far surely it will ever be, "from any worthy Genius to be consenting to such a treacherous Language, and ABUSE of WORDS," which makes Men hate each other for what they cannot understand, and builds FAITH on the Destruction of REASON and VIRTUE.

If it be said that NATURE may be compell'd; This is an Appeal to the almighty Power of GOD, of which we can form no judgment but by Experience. But this Appeal implies either a great Fallacy, or an absolute Contradiction. It is a Contradiction to suppose the Supreme BEING acts against himself; since if Wisdom and Goodness be Attributes, which are suppos'd necessary to belong to him, such Action must annihilate those Attributes, or which is the same Thing with regard to us, must render it impossible for us to form any Conception, or Notion of them. Now these Propositions are equivalent: "NATURE is the WHOLE WORK of GOD," or "the WHOLE WORK of GOD is called NATURE." To deny this is ATHEISM; and to suppose

* LORD SHAFTESBURY.

this

Where pious Zeal ferments with priestly gall, 90
 And what falls short in Proof o'erflows in Rage :
 While

this WORK violated by the WORKER, if he be suppos'd infinitely wise, good, and powerful, is to suppose him acting against himself. But if the WORKER be perfect, nothing can be violated. ALL IS RIGHT. What seems to be wrong, is only in ourselves ; and then only, when by following our own fond and chimerical Imaginations, we falsify his Operations, and attribute to him Things, which have no Connexion or Correspondence with NATURE. This Falsification of NATURE, or Substitution of chimerical and supernatural Notions, and Operations, in Place of real and NATURAL, arises either first, from our Weakness in judging of natural Impressions, and Matters of Fact, and afterwards in mistaking the Effect, which those Impressions make on the Imagination, for the Things themselves which cause them ; from whence Superstition is derived : or secondly, from a wrong Direction, and Application of that Weakness, when these Seeds of Superstition, are cultivated, and as they grow up, transplanted into various Plots and Labyrinths, according to the Genius of those, who in all ages have thought WORDS make VIRTUE, as WOOD makes a GROVE. And from hence those Materials are supplied, which have been used in building the several Fabrics of artificial Religion ; which, when it differs from NATURAL, (and it is always different in its Foundation, and often contrary to NATURAL RELIGION in its Design) so far co-operates with ATHEISM, that without Aid from the former, the very Notion of the latter cou'd NEVER have prevail'd, or forc'd itself on the IMAGINATION of Mankind.

But besides a Contradiction, the Appeal to Almighty Power concerning a Violation of NATURE, implies the greatest Fal-lacy ; since it supposes that to be provable, which if it cou'd be prov'd, and were so admitted and universally employ'd, wou'd effectually destroy the Foundation of all other Proof with Regard to every Thing NATURAL, or REAL. And this again wou'd throw us into ATHEISM.

B

All

While Revelation thunder'd on my Ear

Low rates my Heart's Assent :—O ! help me Heav'n !

To

All Inferences, or Concessions drawn from Experience, Habit, or Custom, though they create Assurance, and we usually think and act, as if they were certain, yet are only probable ; because we see not, nor can see in fact, the secret Principle which connects Cause and Effect.* But Inferences from Reason are demonstrative : because we see in the Relation of abstract Ideas, the necessary Connexion of one Idea with another. In the latter Case we conclude with Certainty from one Instance, the Truth of all of the same Kind ; in the former we conclude only with Probability from many Instances that similar Causes will produce in Succession similar Effects. Custom therefore, when consider'd with relation to external Things, is the continual, and regular Impression made upon our Senses by the Course of NATURE ; which, if it was irregular, inconstant, or violable, there wou'd remain no Rule or Measure of human Action. If the Ratio, or Order of NATURE were destroy'd, the correspondent Ratios of the human Mind must necessarily be destroyed also, and it wou'd be absolutely impossible for Man to become rational, civil, or religious. Without it he cou'd never become rational ; for the Increments of human Reason being dervied from the Ratio of NATURE, which thro' the Senses by customary Progression imprints Ideas on the Imagination, the Mind by observing and retaining them, gradually acquires a Habit of applying them to the several Uses and Purposes of Life. But if these Impressions were without Order, Agreement, or Connexion, that habitual or customary Perception or Belief, by which they are so applied, cou'd not be excited. If Fire was experimentally seen to produce in alternate Turns, contrary Effects in the same Objects, it wou'd be im-

* See HUME Philosoph. Ess.

To check th'impassive Struggler's pure Instinct,
That asks, how God's almighty, if his WILL,

95
Who

possible to render it useful, or subservient to the Wants of human Life. In like Manner, if the Behaviour of Man to Man proceeded from such changeable and arbitrary Principles, all Peace, Order and Concord wou'd be subverted : he wou'd for ever remain in a State of savage Barbarity, and in a Condition much worse ev'n than Wolves and Bears. Legal therefore, or civil, Man cou'd not be. And religious he cou'd not be ; since, having no Notion of a DEITY but what is formed from the Idea of his Works exhibited in Nature, and this Idea being imprinted on the Mind by a gradual Series, and progressive Increment, by Use and Custom, becomes Belief ; which again being regulated by Reason, confirms and establishes the Notion of a SUPREME BEING, infinitely wise, good, and powerful. Hence also, by a Review, or Recognition of this Process, he discovers FAITH, LOYALTY and ALLEGIANCE to be a perfect Duty to this SUPREME BEING, or the Perfection of his own. But if the Order of Things, and RATIO of NATURE did not generate and harmonize the progressive Growth and Order of his own Nature, his Ideas wou'd be nothing but an infinite Number of Conceptions without Band, or Connexion ; without Order or Proportion. In such Condition, Man cou'd acquire no Idea of Wisdom and Design, no Sense or Feeling of Beauty, Virtue and Goodness ; no Notion of a DEITY. Every Thing arbitrary, uncertain, and precarious. Hopeless, comfortless, faithless, he wou'd wander for ever in a forlorn and fatherless World, hating, and hated ; deceiving and deceived. Incapable of that calm and regular Happiness, which flows from TRUTH and VIRTUE ; with sudden Starts, perhaps, and transient Flashes of Imagination, which wou'd only discover the frightful Night, which surrounded him, and in which he must remain for ever subject to perpetual Fear, Horror and Amazement. Such would seem to be the Condition of Man, and such the universal confusion which

Who made this captious World, on which we crawl,
 Cou'd to the Worm, call'd Man, be shew'd in vain ?

If

wou'd follow, if the regular Operations, and Constitution of Things were violated ; and such in Fact is his present Condition in Proportion as Superstition prevails, and he departs from NATURE. The Course of NATURE * therefore is the GREAT STANDING REVELATION of the WILL or LAW of GOD. We cannot avoid the natural Impressions of WILL or LAW, which by customary Succession create Belief: which is Nothing but a Progression of the Mind or Reason, corresponding with NATURE. Belief then is gradual, or customary Instinct, or progressive Nature in Man, by which the Mind advances to the Knowledge of Truth, and Love of Virtue. It can neither be produced, nor prevented by any Forms of Reasoning, or artificial Method of Argumentation : neither can it be compell'd by Force ; Force can only produce Simulation; and Reason can only direct and regulate this natural INSTINCT. And as this natural Progression is the same in all, as in each Man particularly, so the Direction or Regulation is the same. Hence political, religious, and moral Regulations have all the same Source and Origin, the same Standard and common Measure, in the Order, the Constancy, and Ratio of NATURE. The same customary Instinct, when review'd and recogniz'd, becomes CONSCIENCE ; which also, in Turn, when it becomes customary by the same Progression, becomes also a perfect LAW or Obligation. Hence it appears, that to establish and preserve the Order and Peace of Society, it is not sufficient that good Laws be written or taught, unless the same become customary. But if the Laws written or taught be bad, and do not correspond with NATURE, they may yet become customary, and so prevail. And this

* *Ipse NATURÆ RATIO, quæ est LEX DIVINA & HUMANA. CIC.*

If 'twas the MAKER's LAW to Man proclaim'd,
 By Man's resistless GOD ; if Prophecies
 Excited Hopes, and Miracles confirm'd 100
 Augmented Faith, how cou'd he not believe,
 By Grace invited, and by Pow'r compell'd ?
 Had Heav'n requir'd, cou'd Man refuse Assent ?
 Or not requiring, why was Heav'n profan'd ?

Hum ! from thy dusky Stall, unreasoning Drone, 105
 Prune thy lim'd Wing, and seek the Skies mature !
 Still will thy black'ning Tribe, Earth's busy Swarms,
 Build *Babel's* cloud-top'd Mount's loose crumbling Hope,
 For the next cataract Show'r that sweeps down all.
 Such are the Toils of Rabbies, Popes, Paw-waws, 110
 Muftis, and Lhamas, Morabouts, Bonzees ;
 All the long-labor'd Props of Faith's lost Boast,

this is the Effect of natural INSTINCT wrong directed, and when it supplies Craft with the Materials of Superstition. This is the Source of that Pretence (for it is a Pretence only) that NATURE is corrupted. Thus NATURE is condemn'd for a Corruption introduc'd, habituated, and naturaliz'd, by the customary Influence and Prevalence of superstitious Systems ; while by a strange Deception the necessary Use and Application of those Systems is proved, from that Corruption ; and they are in Fact applied, or pretended to be applied, to correct, and cure that very Disorder which they produce.

(105, &c.) The Poet then attempts to lessen this customary Belief, derived not from NATURE, but from artificial Creeds, and Systems, by shewing the general Weakness, and gradual Decay of Superstition ; and that if Reason doth not, yet Time will destroy all the various Systems of it.

That mould'ring slip beneath the Feet of Time,
And all the mighty Fabric sinks to Dirt.

O'er various Schemes of Faith did various Gods 115
Presiding each his own Dominion claim
Hostile, or leagu'd ; or under various Names
Did ONE sole Pow'r inspire peculiar Pray'rs,
And damn the rest unfavour'd ? Nature feels
This Question : and methinks I hear her Voice 120
Bid REASON thus reply.—If but one Light
Insur'd Salvation's unobstructed Course,
Unlanthorn'd, it had known no curtail'd Shine,
All Dark had been illumin'd ; ne'er with-held
Just GOD from more than half th' extended Globe 125
All glimpse of Dawn, yet curs'd the Gloom he caus'd !

Or grant some Race indulg'd with kinder Smile ;
Why partial to the proud, Sin's haughtiest Sons ?
Yet heedless of unfolded Flocks more meek,
More aw'd, more simply serious in FAITH'S Field ? 130
Anxious in Adoration's twilight gleam ;
And prostrate, tho' neglected ? Why, again,
In Truth's appropriate, and selected Seats,
Shoots EDEN'S Heav'n-watch'd Tree, for ever prun'd,
For

(134, &c.) " EDEN'S HEAV'N-WATCH'D TREE." The
Doctrine of Immortality, or, (as it is call'd,) of SALVATION,
was *Egyptian*, but rejected by MOSES, for Reasons too long to
be here enumerated. It hath been grafted however upon his
System, tho' contrary to it. It is also pretended to be laid open
to all : tho' so guarded, that without License from the Keepers,
none

For ever fruitless, into monstrous Growths 135
 Of thorn-branch'd Opposition ? If to doubt
 Religion's lifeless Form, were to destroy
 The spirit of her Purpose : Why o'er Lands,
 That boast high Claim to Systems Heav'n-inspir'd,
 Spread Schemes of different Texture ? Each avow'd 140
 God's own injoin'd sole Rule, reveal'd to save !

Alas ! 'tis Man's proud Heart, that fondly fill'd
 With self-paid Rev'rence for Desert misclaim'd,
 Grown impious in imagin'd Sanctity,
 Hugs his own Day-dreams idolis'd within, 145
 And styles 'em REVELATION ! Hence the Buzz

Of

none may hope to attain it. Mean time those Keepers and their Followers are divided into so many different Sects, who generally hate each other, that whatever Reasons are employed by any one of them to reject the rest, may with greater propriety be employed to reject all, since that in which they place their chief Strength, and characteristical Excellency, is really inconsistent with NATURE. The Poet in this Description follows the *Mosaic ALLEGORY*.

142, &c.) The Poet here characterises the several Species of Bigotry, arising either from Fanaticism or Superstition. There is also another Sort, derived from metaphysical Fanaticism ; which, tho' founded in Pride, yet associates with the rest, at the same Time that it wou'd seem to despise them. This metaphysical Bigotry grew up apace, when Heathen Sophistry was grafted on Christian Simplicity. The Spirit of CREED-MAKING then began. Phantastical Chimæras receiv'd the falsified Seal or Mark of Truth ; while none were allowed to enquire or doubt, but all took Tickets of Salvation for so small a Price as IMPLICIT FAITH,

Of honeyless, and stinging Wasps of Zeal,
 Alike on all sides heard, on all sides felt,
 Spoilers of VIRTUE, ruthless Sons of Fraud !
 Each charg'd in Heav'n's Pretence with menac'd Hell ! 150
Jews, Tartars, Bramins, bordering Gange's Flood,
 Swift

(151, &c.) In tracing the Stream of Superstition, the various Branches of it are here delineated. The *Chinese* reckon backward thro' an immense Length of Time, in which it kept the same Channel. Yet their MANDERINES, or learned Men, are said to be all ATHEISTS ; which supplies a new Proof of that Confederacy, noted before, between Superstition and ATHEISM. *ÆGYPT* marked by the River NILE is justly esteemed the Parent of Superstition. The *Ægyptian* Priests also pretended to shew very ancient Records, in which they preserved the Calculations of *Eclipses*, and the Successions of Time. The Emperor CONSTANTINE made (as is pretended) a Donation of ROME to Pope SYLVESTER, which with the adjoining *Campania* has since been named St. PETER's Patrimony. That Emperor while he was yet an Heathen, had been guilty ('tis said) of such Crimes, that when he sought Expiation, his Priests, less complaisant than might be expected, absolutely refused ; pretending their Religion had provided no Expiation for such enormous Guilt. So he applied to the *Christian* Priests, and receiv'd from them that Absolution which had been denied by his own. Being thus suddenly converted, and sanctified, the Consequence must needs be some extraordinary Act of Zeal. Accordingly he settled on the *Christian* all the immense Wealth of the Heathen Hierarchy ; a Deed which from the Motive and Manner of Execution, and especially from the Consequences, might well be deemed an Effect of Dotage. 'Tis now about 1500 Years since this remarkable Donation ; so that the Superstition, Fanaticism, Tyranny and Bigotry, which have been derived from it, may be truly pictur'd as " grey with Dotage."

Swift Hords of hot *Arabia's* swarthy Sons,
 Far *China's* dateless Race, long *Nile's* old Claim
 To superstition's Childhood, triple *Rome*
 Grey with Imperial Dotage : Each Heav'n's choice, 155
 Yet each from each distinct ; ALL spurn'd by ALL,
 Twist Revelation into Gordion Snarls,
 And murder to shew Mercy, damn to save !

All these Divisions, dividant again, 160
 Break from their Centre, like the Winds wide Points,
 Yet ev'ry Blast is sacred. High enthron'd
 In the dark Storm th' Arch-priests triumphant ride ;
 While proud in mock Divinity each claims
 A Right to save, or charitably damn. 165
 Each different Faith inspir'd with different Zeal,
 Boasts sole Disposal of the Light of Heav'n ;
 Till Discord kindling from the scatter'd Sparks
 Of Truth, and Love, blown with the Blast of Pride,

In

(169.) If we consider the Weakness of Men, how apt they are to deceive, and to be deceived ; to invent, and to believe a LYE ; their whole Pursuit of TRUTH may seem to terminate in certain Degrees of Probability, or Verisimilitude. And this perhaps wou'd serve their Turn well enough, if they did not value the Name more than the Thing, and the Praise of it more than the Use. But while in this Pursuit they stoop to take up the gilded BALL of Profit, and Honour, Envy and Discord immediately arise, and prevail in Proportion to the Eagerness of Hope in gaining, or to the Violence of Fear in losing those darling Objects : under the Deception and Inchantment of these Passions,

In one vast Conflagration wafts Mankind.

170

Where art thou fled, fair CHARITY? sweet Breath,
That stills the stormy Soul! soft Eye of Peace!
That weep'st at all this Mischief! see'st Man's Pride
Mistaken for Religion! whispering low

In

Passions, they are forcibly driven another Way; they depart from their first Aim, and soon lose sight of Truth; while PRIDE assuming the Name of Zeal, by covering the Deception, sanctifies the Violence of Opposition, and pretending to blow the Sparks of Truth, kindles the Flame of Persecution. This outrageous Spirit of Bigotry, if it did not first arise, undoubtedly receiv'd Growth, and Force from that metaphysical Jargon, and chimerical Science, which the Heathen Sophists introduc'd into the *Christian* Religion, deforming its Simplicity, and corrupting the Truth. These, on the Conversion of *Constantine*, run like a Torrent into the fashionable System, and brought with them all the mud, and filth of Heathenism. In this rich Glebe Weeds grew luxuriantly, and among the rest, false ZEAL acquir'd, now, such a poisonous Quality, that it destroy'd CHARITY, the most essential Part of that Religion, which it pretended to support. Thus it hath ever since continued to disturb Mankind, from that Time to the present; with Fits however of Remission, and Abatement, in our own Country at least, where it hath been check'd by the FREEDOM of WIT and HUMOUR: which, as our NOBLE BRITISH PHILOSOPHER teaches, and by his Example shews, hath proved the only specific Cure of religious Madness. We are pleas'd to see the Disguise of Falshood removed, and we embrace Truth more sincerely, when the Deformity of Error is discover'd; while, as COMMON SENSE and EQUAL TASTE prevail, we tolerate with Ease, and even indulge in each other that Difference of Opinion which seems unavoidable. The Hierarchy indeed are offended at this, and when they are not allowed to persecute, complain of Persecution.

(180, &c.)

In the calm Voice of universal Love, 175
Soft as the tepid Zephyr's downy Wing,
Th' odorous Breezes of thy balmy Gale
Fly scatter'd wide in Persecution's Blast!

Loft and bewilder'd in this warring Waste,
And gloomy Darkness of CHAOTIC FAITH, 180
How shall a lightless Wanderer find the Way
That leads to peaceful Mansions of fair TRUTH?
How chuse a faithful Guide, whose sacred Brow
Bears Heav'n's commission'd Stamp? or if impos'd
The destin'd SEER forestalls deliberate Choice; 185
While Craft before invites with seeming Guise,

Smiling Deceit array'd in shadowy Hope,
And Zeal behind, waving her flaming Brand
Drives on impetuous, and forbids Retreat,
Fright'ning Credulity with formless Dread: 190
How shou'd the ensnar'd Adventurer escape
Labyrinthian Error, which the Touch
Of Pride hath consecrated into FAITH?
Bid MIRACLES decide contested Claim.

Where

(180, &c.) Amidst this rage of Bigotry, and Confusion of Belief, the Poet enquires next how the sober FREE-THINKER may avoid that Error, which Pride hath sanctified with the Name of FAITH.

(194, &c.) If MIRACLES are requir'd in Proof of Truth; neither the present Taste of the Times, nor the watchful Caution of the Hierarchy, will allow, it seems, the Experiment; tho'

Where are they ? call aloud, they will not hear. 195
 Prudent Restraint forbids expiring Hope

To

tho' some attempts, it must be own'd, even in our own Country, and more, and greater Efforts, as might be expected, have been made in a neighbouring Nation, to restore this EYESIGHT PROOF. We must recur therefore to former Times, more proper for such extraordinary Operations, and, as it should seem, before the Order and Constancy of NATURE was understood. Here then we are guided only by Record, Report, or Tradition. But the Impressions made by these Reports, being either contrary to NATURE, or at least not confirmed by the consequent Order and Constitution of Things, when it was afterwards observed to be more regular and constant, like Objects seen at a Distance, become gradually more weak by Time, and evanescent. On the other hand, natural Impressions, or Matters of Fact, receive continual Increments from Repetition, and become by custom more strong, clear and vivid. To repair therefore the gradual Decay, to which the former are subject, the Managers of Miracles have contrived, by frequent Repetitions, to give them Form, and Semblance at least, if not the Substance, of real Facts. But in this Attempt, by bringing them too near the Sight, the Fallacy has been discover'd, and the Purpose defeated, by those very Means which were intended to establish it. The wisest therefore, and most judicious of those * Managers, have corrected this Mistake. They have retrench'd the Number of these specious, or artificial Miracles, limited the Times of Operation, and appropriated their Purpose, not to private, but to public Utility. And this seems to be the only legitimate Purpose in which they can be properly employ'd. But even here too the greatest Caution in using them is necessary, as

* MIDDLETON, FREE ENQUIRY, &c.

To court Renewal of old Eye-sight Proofs,
Which deign'd in Days long past, to strike Doubt dumb,
Dead

they are much more apt to associate with Error and Vice, than with Truth and Virtue. They are indeed so far from proving themselves, and even from adding Strength by their Association to Truth and Virtue, that even their own Proof depends on the Worth and Value which they receive from that Association. Nothing then can be proved with them, but what must be first proved, and therefore better proved without them: so that while we see their bad Influence insensibly decay, and vanish, we need be the less solicitous about losing the good Effects, which some have supposed them capable of producing: and that (as the great ROMAN PHILOSOPHER observes with his usual Sagacity) "no one ought to wonder, that HUMAN ARTIFICE is overcome by DIVINE NECESSITY." *Neminem MIRARI debere HUMANA CONSILIA DIVINA NECESSITATE esse superata.*† Our Poet treats the Subject in a picturesque Manner, and exhibits to the Eye a Prospect not more imaginary than the Things represented.

In the Front the GHOST of TIME appears, leading in his Hand a Train of Spectres, who in long Order of Succession are seen to diminish, as the distance increases. Around him stand in various Attitudes the Forms of Ignorance, Credulity, Fear, Horror, and Amazement; while the HIEROPHANT, THEOLOGUE, or ARCH-PRIEST, appears in a Corner, half conceal'd as it were behind the Scene, and pointing with his Rod to the Figures of Superstition, Fanaticism, and Bigotry, who shift and change the Scene according to his Direction; while the various fluid Forms, in pressing to advance foremost, penetrate and mix with each other, compounding strange Shapes, and monstrous Appearances. The Light, as the Subject requires, is obscure,

† CIC. pro LIGARIO.

Dead Time's departed Ghost recorded holds
 Millions of Wonders in his shadowy Hand, 200
 Dread Spectres once, now harmless, dimly seen
 Diminish'd in their Distance, dubious Forms,
 Whose slippery Lapse the Eye contracted strains,
 And wakeful Horror strives to hold in vain :
 Like Dreams elusive that deceive the Sense, 205
 Or fleeting Shades beneath the moon-light gleam.
 Now silent march the inexistent Hosts,
 The dead Life-guards of unsubstantial Faith.
 Contending each with each, the fluid Forms
 Pass pervious; and, in penetrating, mix 210

Mon-

and uncertain, and the whole Scene exhibits something like that which appears by Moonlight, when in a windy Night the Clouds in rolling break and mix together.

(207.) "UNSUBSTANTIAL FAITH." This Epithet has the happy Propriety, which expresses some unobserv'd Quality in the Subject, which either renders TRUTH more conspicuous, or Falshood more ridiculous. And according to our noble Philosopher's Definition, IMPLICIT FAITH, when applied to objects beyond, or out of NATURE, in which the Understanding can have no Certainty, or Assurance, is Nothing more than a Kind of "passive SCEPTICISM"; while the mere ORTHODOX ZEALOT, in finding himself externally compell'd to believe, yet at the same Time internally forc'd to doubt; and being thus impell'd by a Power compounded of Reluctance and Fear, forms at last a "Resolution to examine, recollect, consider, or hear as little as possible to the Prejudice of that Belief, which having once espoused, he is ever after afraid to lose."

To

Monstrous Alliance, soon with Reason's Touch
 Dissolv'd, as Night's dim Shades in sun-gilt Day.
 Match Miracles with Miracles, array'd,
 To push back every Angel's vain Descent,
 That comes with Errands hostile to their own. 215

Where MIRACLES try TRUTH, no FAITH is false,
 What nameless Corner of the World untouch'd,
 By Trade's far furrowing Keel, ev'n safely new
 To the unquenchable and sacred Thirst
 Of Missionary *Rapin's* holy Zeal, 220

But boasts believ'd Descent of some kind God,
 Who chose their lov'd Forefathers, bless'd their Race,
 And taught 'em for his Glory!—Zeal'd with Trust,
 In their transmitted TALE, th'invited Guests
 Take place at Heav'n's high Table,—upmost ALL! 225

SUCH are the SONS of FAITH; white, black, and
 brown,

Olive, and copper-hued; furr'd, naked, cloth'd;
 Bearded, or beardless: feather'd, capp'd, or crown'd: *
 The Grease-anointed, woolly-headed, shorn,
 Long-hair'd and short-hair'd, curl'd and cropt E-

LECT:

230

ALL scorn a temperate Virtue, and the calm

Peace

* The papal, Tripple Crown, or MITRE, is here denoted.

(231.) It is truly observed of all BIGOTS, that they affect to
 vilify REASON, and that calm, temperate, and NATURAL
 ORDER

Peace of Contentment under REASON's Sway:

Blasted with Light'ning, catch the MARTYR's FLAME,
Or

ORDER and PEACE of MIND, which it recommends. They seem to trample upon mere HUMAN VIRTUE, as DIOGENES did upon the PRIDE of PLATO. And sometimes also, in their triumphant Exultations, we see them capering so high, that like DAVID before the ARK, they discover their Nakedness. For when as it seems in a merry Vein, and gamefome Mood, they deviate a little from their native Ferocity, and venture to ridicule Truth and Virtue * “ as IMPIOUS, NOISY, NOTHINGS:” Let us not mistake rheir Humour: These are expressions of their Pride, of their Anger, and of Resentment; not of Mirth. They lash themselves more than FERE-THINKERS. In this indeed they imitate the LION; who, tho' the Fable were inverted, wou'd yet have Tail enough to lash his own Sides; which, according to Naturalists, is always a Sign that he is angry. 'Tis well they want the Power of that terrible Animal! Εὔλασεν ἰ Λέων.

(233.) It was an Effect of antient Superstition, that he, who was blasted, or kill'd by Lightning, was suppos'd to be a Favourite of Heav'n; for so, it seems, the Impostor ALEXANDER applies it, according to LUCIAN. This Favour however seems to be limited, and to belong only to those, who were inspir'd with the prophetic Spirit.

Ἦδε προφητεῖν [Ψυχῇ] διὸς φρενὸς ἐστὶν ἀπορρώξ
Ἐς διὸς ἔισι, διὸς βληκείσα ΤΕΡΑΤΝΩ.

*Prophetic Souls descended from above,
By JOVE's own THUNDER struck, return to JOVE.*

This is the fiery Chariot, in which many a SAINT, PROPHET, or frantic ZEALOT, hath been carried to Heav'n. ZEAL with IMPLICIT FAITH is equally fitted to receive, or to inflict the

* D. 4. Vol. I. p. 41.

Or mount the fiery CAR to prove their Race
Celestial, and affect ev'n Heav'n—in SPITE.

235

Since

Test of MARTYRDOM. Crouds with most ardent Importunity have offered themselves to this fiery Tryal of FAITH; while others in some Countries, ev'n at this Day, with equal Extasy, behold it inflicted as a Punishment of INFIDELITY. A noble and lately flourishing City lies now in Ruins, which hath been a frequent Scene of this unnatural Joy; and what seems indeed remarkable, the Desolation was poured out on that very Day, on which, according to annual Custom, this inhuman TRAGEDY should have been acted. But GOD, the supreme Conductor of the Machinery, and of the universal System of NATURE, was pleased to change the Scene, and represent a far different Spectacle, less horrible indeed than the other, but much more dreadful and terrible! dreadful above the Power of Description; and terrible beyond the power of Imagination! and what now will the dogmatizing Zealot assert concerning this vast Calamity? he who pretends a Commission to understand, and to reveal the SECRETS of PROVIDENCE? he who loves to turn Error into SIN, and Destruction into VENGEANCE? Was it a Punishment inflicted on ORTHODOXY, or on INFIDELITY? or shall we rather affirm, with more Sobriety, and without affecting to know the SECRETS of PROVIDENCE, that in all Circumstances, Benevolence is due from MAN to MAN, and in all Events perfect Submission and Resignation from MAN to his MAKER? Such Belief would check the Rage of ZEAL, when it kindles into Persecution; and when it executes Vengeance on Man, in Pretence of executing the WILL of GOD.—— Mean Time this ZEAL is found to agree very well with the greatest VICE and WICKEDNESS. That royal SAINT, ADULTERER, and MURDERER, according to his own Account, was “devoured with ZEAL:” while, like NERO, he tuned his Harp, inspired with Passions, which have set the World on fire; his pious Hymns and sanctified Execrations are promiscuously blended together, and too often, by modern Zealots, sung with the same Intention.

C

(234.)

Since then th'extremest polar Tracts of FAITH,
 Where REASON's one Eye winks, unbeam'd with Day,
 Plead MIRACLES in Proof, which none can try,
 Reported, but not seen; of Times long lost
 Memory's dull Dotage, tasteless of the Light 240
 Present, the same as past; let Learning shun

The

(234.) This is an Allusion, as is usual with Poets, to the old Heathenish Story of PHAETON; he was a King, and reputed Son of PHOEBUS, or the SUN. The Reality of this celestial Lineage being doubted, it seems, by some Freethinker in those early Ages, in Order to vindicate his Birth, and avoid the Ridicule of a false Claim, he begs of his father to allow him, for one Day, to drive his Chariot. APOLLO consents, though with much Reluctance. Accordingly he mounted the Chariot, and perished in the Flames; which, by his ill Management, set the World on fire. This Fable hath a great Meaning; but too long for this Place.

(241.) Since the Proof of MIRACLES depends altogether on Report, or Tradition, which prevails most in Times of Ignorance, it should seem to be a Mark of Weakness in Men of Learning, when they attempt to prove Truth, by those Means, which falsify NATURE, and establish Error. And in Reality no Evidence is sufficient to prove a MIRACLE (in the common Acceptation of that Word) unless it be sufficient also to prove the Course of NATURE, and the Experience of Sense to be inconsistent. But we have proved before, that between NATURE and Experience there is a certain Correspondence, Proportion, or Harmony, on which all our Reasoning depends. How then can MIRACLES prove TRUTH, when no Evidence less than that, which would destroy all TRUTH, can prove a MIRACLE? Or how can we reason from that, which, if it could be

The fond Delusion of such cloudy Plea,
Which Error must assert, or Truth disclaim.

But off! stand back! make room ye coarse profane!
Ye Vulgar of Religion's suburb World! 245
Ye

be proved to be true, would destroy the very Foundation of Reason?

(244.) Having shewed in general the Weakness of FAITH founded in Superstition, he proceeds to shew the Weakness of particular Systems of it, which have all had their Times of Growth, of Maturity, and of Decay.

But INFALLIBILITY it seems stands in the Way; and like a Rock opposed to the Fury of Winds and Waves, resists the whole Force of REASON and FREE-THINKING; This is the Summit, or highest Point of the Pyramid of ecclesiastical Polity, a grand Fabric! which an illustrious CARDINAL * calls "the most perfect political Constitution that ever was established in the World." Here we see, as a learned Writer expresses it, a Concatenation of MIRACLES, deduced in a long Series, from the Beginning to the present Time, ALL united in ONE POINT, which afford a Proof SIMILAR to THAT, which is deduced from NATURE to prove a DEITY." The MIRACLES of NATURE do indeed prove a DEITY; but artificial MIRACLES have no other Effect, and perhaps no other Purpose, than to drive Men, either through Despair, into Atheism, or through Fear, into Superstition. The latter Part of this is apparent; the former corresponds with a fine Reflection of Mr. Fontenelle: "We often find the Truth, but either don't know it; or can't prove that we have found it." "It is but too plain then (quoth the

* CORPO POLITICO PIU FELICE CHE SIA in Terra. So also he says, CHRISTO ERA GRANDE POLITICO. PALLAVICINI Hist. Trent.

Ye Goats unshepherded ! unfish'd for Shoals !
 Unmesh'd by mystic Union's indragg'd Net .

Of

“ Impostor) that it was not made for us ; and you'll see at last,
 “ People won't so much as think of finding it. They'll lose
 “ their Courage and throw up the Game.” FONTENELLE
 DIALOGUES. The Papists are not agreed in whom to place In-
 fallibility. Some, as the Jesuits, place it in the POPE; others
 in a General Council ; others in the CHURCH. It must be
 owned however, that if we view this papal Doctrine of Infalli-
 bility, as softened with the curious Pen of one of their greatest
 Writers, it seems very little different from that which prevails in
 every Sect of Protestants, who, if they are not infallible, yet are
 never deceived. The POPE allows no Enquiry, no Doubt.
 This is consistent. The Protestant allows, encourages and even
 provokes Enquiry, yet condemns Doubt as impious. “ When a
 “ Man depends either entirely on FAITH, as the PAPIST, or
 “ entirely on Reason, as the THEIST, it is easy to form a con-
 “ sistent Scheme of Doctrine. But when once he attempts to
 “ compound their different Powers, he presently falls into Opi-
 “ nions, of which the sole Contrariety is a manifest Proof of their
 “ Falshood.” This is the Observation of that great Writer,
 above-mentioned, the famous Bishop of MEAUX ; whose Expo-
 sition was said to have converted to Popery the great TURENNE.
 That illustrious Prelate saw very well the Inconsistency of ad-
 mitting REASON, as a Principle of NATURE, to co-operate with
 religious, political, or artificial FAITH, which wholly excludes
 NATURE. So then, it seems, the Papist and the THEIST,
 each in his own Way, may both form a consistent Scheme of
 Doctrine. The Consistence of the former depends on AUTHO-
 RITY. It turns on a single Point, Obedience to the CHURCH.
 The Consistence of the latter is founded in NATURE. It is a cer-
 tain and necessary Correspondence of SENSE, REASON and Ex-
 perience, with the certain and necessary Order of Things. In
 the former, artificial Objects of Passion are substituted for natural;
 and

Of never erring Sweep, deduc'd from Heav'n !
Room for the Papal Pontiff's Triple Crown !

Now

and on this Substitution the Calculation proceeds of all the several Orders and Proportions of this mighty Fabric. These Orders and Proportions being only apparent, or imaginary, easily slide into each other, and like the Visions of a Dream, vanish and disappear ; while from the same fruitful Source new Orders arise, and are again dissolved with the same Ease, and without Ruin or even Disturbance. The **WHOLE** is indeed arbitrary, fantastical, and chimerical ; and the several Parts, like a Heap of Sand, are contiguous, but not connected ; without Beauty, without Convenience, without Strength ; yet as the Eye is wholly fix'd, and the Attention engaged on one single Point of Obedience, or Infallibility ; all these Minuteneesses disappear to the customary Religionist, and sometimes ev'n to a judicious Eye * the Magic Structure appears with Marks of just Design, convenient, graceful, and grand.

The Scheme of **THEISM** is that in Reality, which the Scheme of Papistry is only in Appearance. In the latter the **ART** of Man assumes and exercises almighty Power and Infallibility ; while according to the Nature of its Subject, which is merely imaginary, it arbitrarily and at Pleasure, forms and unforms its several Orders, without the least Disturbance. In the latter, the Mind hath even a larger Scope, and Exercise, but in a different Way ; for here it is wholly employed in observing, in reporting, in recognizing the **ART** of **GOD**, exhibited in **NATURE**, or the **SYSTEM** of the **UNIVERSE**. The System of **THEISM** therefore, is a Picture copied, or imitated, from **NATURE**. If then there be Consistence in **NATURE** ; if in the universal Frame and System of Things, there be Convenience, Beauty, and Grandeur ;

* Sir EDWIN SANDYS View, &c. **CHARACTERISTICS**.
Vol. III. p. 93.

Now heretic Presumer, bow convinc'd !
 Infallibility unwinds her Scroll ;

250

SAINTS,

If in the Works of God there be Perfection ; then the System of THEISM is consistent, convenient, beautiful, great and perfect.

FAITH, in the papal Scheme, being founded on Authority and Custom, is implicit, passive, or merely verbal. There is no Contradiction perceived in Propositions, which have no Reference to Things ; or if perceived, it is verbal only ; and then a verbal FAITH is sufficient for a verbal Proposition. AUTHORITY, by exciting false Passions, begins the Circulation, Custom receives it, and it gains, as a Lye gains Belief, by Repetition. On the other Hand, FAITH, according to the System of THEISM, is indeed originally implicit, and passive, but not verbal. It consists in a Correspondence with NATURE ; it is derived from natural Impressions, established by Experience and Custom ; and in a gradual Progression being reviewed, and recognized by REASON, it becomes rational and free ; while the Mind assents willingly, and deliberately, without Reluctance, without Compulsion, and without Authority. Reason indeed accrues from natural Impressions, and customary Belief ; which, in this Case, is truly progressive INSTINCT. It increases, as Reason with the Knowledge of NATURE increases ; and improves, and is capable of Improvement, in an endless Progression. If therefore Reason be useful in human Affairs, if it be most useful in Things of most Importance, and lastly, if TRUTH, and VIRTUE, and RELIGION, be indeed Things of most Importance ; then is FAITH according to the System of THEISM, most useful, most reasonable, and most important. It is adapted to all Men, at all Times ; it insinuates and ev'n forces itself on all Men, at all Times ; and except only when disturbed, or perverted, or counteracted by artificial Schemes of FAITH, and Systems of Superstition ; it is embraced and followed by all Men, at all Times. It is the perpetual, continual and universal REVELATION of the WILL, or LAW of GOD, to all Men, at all Times, in different Degrees,
 and

SAINTS, MARTYRS, ANGELS, seventeen Centuries down
 Link Pow'r to Pow'r, and length'ning Faith's old Rod,
 Dibble

and in a gradual Progression ; strong even before REASON acquires Maturity, but clear and more strong when reviewed and recogniz'd by REASON. This FAITH therefore MAY, and THIS alone CAN, be truly called CATHOLIC.

It was said above, that either in Popery, or in THEISM, a consistent Scheme of FAITH may be formed. That Consistency is now mark'd, and characteris'd. It was also said, that a Mixture, or Composition of both, produces a Scheme inconsistent.—Of papal Faith mere WORDS or SOUNDS are the immediate, though the ultimate Object is Authority, or INFALLIBILITY; which indeed, without Force, wou'd be mere Words too.—Now in all other Cases, Men being accusom'd to affix some Meaning to Words, ev'n in the Expression of Passions, when the Idea and Perception are most confus'd ; the Imagination can never rest, till it has try'd, in this Case too, to fix some Meaning. From this Curiosity it happens, that in all Systems of Superstition, Innovations and Reformations are gradually formed, which, as they grow, either fall away, or are forced away, from the Parent Stock. In these Reformations, TRUTH at first seems to be the only Thing designed ; the Freedom of Reason is sufficiently indulg'd ; which goes as well, and as far as it can go, at a Time when it is but just out of Dading-strings. But the Priests, when once they find themselves settled, like a Hare in her Form, always look backwards ; always jealous, without Cause, of those, who have most Cause to be jealous of them, they still fancy themselves hunted and pursued ; and think their only Safety consists in doubling back again into the same Track, and repeating the same Ring *. All the Lines of their Hopes, of their Designs, and of their Actions, center in that Point, where Licence was first changed into Freedom, and REASON took the

* *In Gyrum Rationis & Doctrinae. CIC.*

Dibble with long Tradition's twisted Line.

Hail, venerable Weakness ! awful Dream !
Shade of a Shadow ! THOU that blindly hop'st

255

By

Seat of Authority ; Reason therefore and Freedom they abhor, even when they pretend to indulge them ; and they abhor because they fear them. Nothing makes them secure but INFALLIBILITY ; nothing agrees so well with Infallibility as MYSTERY. Hence the Resemblance of Mysteries in all Systems of Superstition, and in all Changes, and Reformations of those Systems. This strong Hold, however, has not always been understood ; and not being understood, has sometimes been betray'd, ev'n by the Priests themselves. It has been betray'd when they have attempted to explain, and to measure by the Rule of Reason, Things which are inexplicable, and incommensurable.

If a Mystery be said to be contained in certain Words, but not expressed, or revealed, the Imagination fatigues and confounds itself to no Purpose in pursuing a Hint which either points at NOTHING, or, which is the same, at Nothing which is the Object of human Understanding. Hence all that strange Confusion in the Explication of Mysteries supposed, but not expressed. But if, besides a Mystery, the Words also plainly imply a Contradiction ; then Reason being clearly seen to be an improper Rule, or Measure of Mystery, nothing can be sufficient to establish the latter, but INFALLIBILITY. But it is now too late to recur to Infallibility, which, by admitting Reason, had been before rejected. This Inconsistency belongs to those, who, without pretending to Infallibility, admit the Co-operation of Reason with FAITH. It is indeed a great Inconsistency ; for, when a free Enquiry is permitted, and Examination allowed, of Mysteries of FAITH ; and when, as a Consequence of such Enquiry, Dissent, in many Cases, seems unavoidable ; if yet that Dissent is deemed impious, in like Manner as when Infallibility exacts implicit Belief : what is this but to use, without pretending Infallibility, and to compell under Pretence of Freedom ? What is this but to tempt, to betray,

By twice nine Ages hoarse-resounding Noise,
To o'ercome strong Reason's Evidence ! yet shun'st

To

tray, and even to insult Mankind, while they are invited to use their Reason freely, when yet they are punished for that Freedom? The Design, however, seems originally to have been generous and humane, but perverted, as Religion hath always been perverted, by the Jealousy of those, who either foolishly fear that Men should know too much to be instructed; or who do not see that the Scheme of FAITH, which they have formed, is composed of Parts, which destroy each other, and that while they mix TRUTH with CHIMERAS, it resembles that visionary IMAGE * “ whose Head was of pure Gold, but the Feet were Clay.”

Thus Infallibility is necessary in all Systems of Superstition, to render the several Forms consistent; but this Consistency extends no farther than the Form itself, by which the Faithful are compelled, rather than united, with Regard to NATURE and COMMON SENSE, the whole FORM remains inconsistent, notwithstanding; except only when sometimes perhaps it may seem to correspond with NATURE. The System of THEISM can alone be perfectly consistent, because it perfectly corresponds with NATURE. The ONE rests on REAL INFALLIBILITY, the OTHER ON PRETENDED; one is founded on the Authority of GOD, the other on the CRAFT of MAN; THEISM therefore is universal, it prevails more or less every where, and at all Times, wherever there are Creatures capable of perceiving and recognizing the Effects of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. The pretended Infallibility of artificial FAITH imitates also these Characters, and proves, or attempts to prove, its Reality by Extent, and Duration. But if other precedent Systems of Superstition, of much larger Extent, and longer Duration have all failed, this Failure may seem to render probable the Opinion that even this

* DAN. ii. 32,

To recollect how thrice Ten Cent'ries join'd
 Their vain Support,—yet saw Jove's Fabric fall ! 260
 Plead'st thou Duration, or gigantic Size ?

What art thou but an Infant's tott'ring Step,
 Compar'd with mightier Growths now found no more ?
 —Where are the Deities of muse-tongu'd GREECE ?

Where rising Science dawn'd with Reason's Beam, 265
 And dim Deception first began to fade ?

Whose Arms and Arts, in one mix'd Blaze of Pow'r,
 Held out high FREEDOM's Torch to half Mankind ;
 Where is her PHOEBUS, where her PALLAS NOW ?

Turn thy Eyes Eastward o'er the Time-hush'd Plains,
 (Now Graves of vanish'd Empires) gleaming once 271
 From Flames on hallow'd Altars, hail'd by Hymns
 Of SEERS, AWAKENERS of the worship'd SUN.

Ask silent *Tigris*, bid *Euphrates* tell ;

Where is the grove-crown'd BAAL, to whose stern Frown
 Bow'd haughty BABYLON ? *Chaldea* fam'd 276

For Star-taught Sages ; TYRE's adventurous Sons,
 Bold Fear surmounting Curbers of the Deep,

Who stretch'd their floating Sceptre o'er the Seas,
 And made Mankind one Empire ? Where is NOW 280

ÆGYPT

too may fail, “ *Opinionum Commenta delet dies : NATURÆ ju-*
 “ *dicia confirmat.*” * This Argument is extended to l. 358.

* CIRC.

EGYPT's wide-homag'd Isis? where the MARS,
 Who bore the *Roman* EAGLE o'er the World,
 That carried JOVE's own Thunder on his Wing?

Where,

(281.—9.) The Roman Empire was founded in Superstition supported by MIRACLES and PROPHECIES. In their religious System, the *Aegyptian* Doctrine of a future state was imitated and proved, as the *Aegyptians* proved it, by Fact: In this Contrivance a great Extent of Knowledge is visible. The Nature of Eclipses were then understood, and the Times calculated and applied, to excite Fear or Hope, Terror or Assurance, as might best serve the Purposes of mythological Legislature. On this Machinery *Romulus* was deified, † the Government established, and an Expectation raised and cherished of its eternal Duration. Hence VIRGIL, alluding to this Expectation, calls the CAPITOL IMMOVEABLE:—CAPITOLI IMMOBILE SAXUM.

And our Poet here, whose Design was, not to cherish, but to destroy such fond Expectations, represents that Eternity as a vain Dream, the Offspring of Superstition and the Parent of Pride. The real MERIT of the Roman Genius and Discipline (which indeed was very great) consisted in a Conformity with NATURE, as far as NATURE was then understood. COMMON SENSE was the Measure of COMMON GOOD; and Superstition was employ'd to the same Purpose; It was, however, always subservient, not supreme; because, as VARRO says, "the State existed before the several Deities were instituted." "*Quia Civitates Diis, quos ipsæ instituerant, ut Pictor Tabellâ, priores sunt.*" This Method, which rendered Superstition subservient to the State, gave Room and Freedom to human Nature to exert itself. Accordingly the *Romans* were remarkable for Simplicity of Manners,

† *Tempestas Solisque Defectio Consecrationis Speciem præbuere: cui mox Julius Proculus Fidem fecit.* Flor.

for

Where the Teutonic WODEN, THOR and all
 The barbarous Names, that from the frozen North, 288
 Pour'd their fierce Millions o'er the fertile Plains
 Of *Latium*, and with stronger Thunder hurl'd,
 High JOVE, degraded from th' Imperial Rock,
 Immoveable in vain ?——If Age gave Strength,
 Why are these fallen ? Why all the lifeless GODS, 290
 Lost Demi-gods, long, nameless, countless Pow'rs,
 That fill'd th' adoring World with fabled Fame——
 Are they not sunk ? whelm'd o'er in Time's black Tide
 A floating Wreck of delug'd GODS roll'd down
 Their own Eternity's oblivious Stream ! 295

How were this possible if Noise were Proof ?
 Or Time's slow Touch, with unperceived Change,
 Cou'd fix at last the slippery Forms of FAITH,
 And ripen Falshood into TRUTH ? Far short
 Of Heav'n falls Time's perspective. Vainly climbs, 300

for Frugality, Sobriety, Temperance, Fortitude, and for every
 Virtue private or public, useful or ornamental: These Virtues
 really made them great; but Superstition corrupted that Great-
 ness, by swelling it into Pride, and an unnatural Lust of Domi-
 nion. Thus, by depriving others of Liberty, they lost their
 own. Luxury followed Conquest, and Vice followed Luxury,
 while Superstition by these Means, became predominant, and
 instead of being subservient to the State, the State was sub-
 servient to Superstition. And now Vice, which in other Cir-
 cumstances, is only a Start or Deviation from NATURE, in this
 Conjunction, and under the Influence of Superstition, became ge-
 neral, habitual, and, as it were, naturaliz'd.

Guile-founded GOD-CRAFT. Let proud Pow'r erect

The Lie-tipt Pyramids aspiring Point,

Divinity still hangs amidst the Clouds,

Yet showr's no Blessing on the subject Glebe.

Again from *Ægypt* call the passive GODS,

305

The titled Fugitives of Heav'n ; in vain

The SERPENTS sneak within their Mother's Lap,

Or lurk in secret in their cavern'd Dens,

Dubious of Godhead, nor unconscious own.

False Immortality ; paternal Rage,

310

Pursues relentless their amphibious Forms,

Till doom'd they fall a FATAL SACRIFICE

To Vengeance, and OLD TIME devours 'em ALL !

Let

(305.) This alludes to a remarkable Revolution in antient Mythology (too long to be explained) when the TITANS rebelling against the GODS, drove them into *Ægypt*, where they lay hid under several assumed Shapes of DOGS, CATS, SERPENTS, &c.

(313.) This is another Allusion to antient Mythology. SATURN, XPONOS, or TIME, according to *Grecian THEOGONY*, was the Father of the GODS, whom he still devoured as soon as they were born, till *Jupiter* and *Juno* being born together, their Mother, by exposing *Juno* to the old KRONE's Jealousy, preserved *Jupiter*, who became afterwards the first and greatest of the Deities ; that is, the first recorded deified Mortal. This Custom of deifying Men, was originally derived from *Ægypt*, and the Effects of it are felt even at this Day, as may be seen from that Expression " out of *Ægypt* have I called my SON." This Fable is ingeniously invented. The Meaning extends far. Time it seems had devoured all the false Idols of Deity, which Super-

Let him who boasts blind Multitudes convinc'd,
The zealous Guardians of wide spreading FAITH, 315
Or long Duration's cloudy Test of TRUTH,
Ask his MERE Obstinacy—What rent Heart

Superstition had raised, and (according to our Poet) TIME will devour ALL which shall be raised on the same Foundation. This Reflexion points the Propriety and Connexion of that Question at l. 346.

(317.) —“ MERE OBSTINACY.” The Poet here has chosen an Epithet, which marks in the strongest Manner the NATURE of IMPLICIT FAITH. The philosophic Emperor had before used an Expression of the same, or perhaps greater Force, which he apply'd to those Christians of his Time, who provoked and even teased the Heathen Magistrate to give the CROWN of Martyrdom. They rushed with a Sort of Violence upon Death, like those, who were resolved to take HEAVEN by Force. Indeed he doth not seem to approve their Zeal. “ The Mind (says he according to his Principles of Stoicism) should be always ready, if need be, to meet Death with Constancy. But this Readiness should arise from Conscience and Judgment; not from MERE OBSTINACY, as in the Christians, who like Players, act only to gain Applause.” *Ἡ ψυχὴ ἡ ἑτοιμος ἐάν τις ἀπολυθῇ δὲ τοῦ Σοματός· το δε ἑτοιμον τοῦτο, ἵνα ἀπο ΙΔΙΚΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΩΣ ἔρχηται· μὴ κατὰ ΨΙΛΗΝ ΠΑΡΑΤΑΞΙΝ, ὡς οἱ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΙ, ἀλλὰ λελογισμένως καὶ ΣΕΜΝΩΣ, καὶ ΑΤΡΑΓΩΔΩΣ. β. 1.* The Word *παραταξις* seems to be derived from military Use, and is an Expression in this Place peculiarly strong and proper. It signifies a tumultuous Rage, or Fury, not only without Order, but against Order; like that of Soldiers, when they rashly expose themselves to Danger, without Command. And indeed this Fury was so great in the Christians of those Times, as to render them quite ridiculous; insomuch that ARRIUS ANTONINUS, when he saw them croud about the Tribunals, called out in Scorn “ O Wretches ! if ye seek Death, are ye so poor that ye cannot

OF CELTIC DRUID, but had shook, more bow'd
 Than his storm-lab'ring Oak, cou'd some pale Shade,
 That scann'd the future Moments of sure Fate, 320
 Have

"cannot buy Halts?" Yet I cannot but think, that in those many dreadful Persecutions raised against them (sometimes it must be owned through their own Fault) great Numbers of them suffered from true Conscience, and on a Principle of Resignation, FAITH and ALLEGIANCE to GOD. These are the noblest Motives, and must produce suitable Behaviour, calm, sober and decent.

(318.) An Opinion propagated by the DRUIDS, that when a Hero died, whom they intended to deify, ALL NATURE was disordered, and as it were, sympathised. This Opinion seems to have extended very far.

(320.) Perhaps a Foresight of the Fact, as here represented, would not have seemed so shocking to the DRUIDS, since they used the same barbarous Superstition, which had long prevailed among many Eastern Nations, from whom they were derived; for DRY signifies MAGUS. They were therefore too well acquainted with the cruel Superstition of human Sacrifices, to be surpris'd at any Deed of that Sort. "The *Albanians*, according to STRABO, dedicated to the MOON, or ANAITIS, a great Number of Priests with ample Revenues for their Maintenance. Many of these being inspired, and filled with a holy Fury, prophesied. But when any one of them was observed to excel the rest in these divine Agitations, and separating from his Companions, wandered alone in the Woods and Desarts; HIM they seized, bound with a sacred Chain, and with great Care fed and dressed sumptuously, for the Space of a WHOLE YEAR, at the End of which he was ANOINTED and SACRIFICED. The Manner of sacrificing was this: The Executioner, with a CONSECRATED KNIFE, PIERCED HIS SIDE," &c.——I beg our Poet's Pardon therefore, if I think him a little

Have shewn him his insulted GODHEAD's DOOM!

Nor let vain Preference of our own touch'd Sense,
 Our own clear surer Lights, our own safe Trust,
 Degrading ancient Stubbornness of Faith,
 O'er-rate Attachment's Warmth, as now most strong,
 What ow'd Allegiance? What more firm Belief? 326
 What haughtier Sureness more imprints the Soul,
 By modern new-cast Forms of Faith inspir'd,
 Than sway'd the solemn Pagan's Breast of old,
 When bow'd before his IDOLS? IDOLS NOW, 330
 But then, vindictive Gods, that shook Mankind!

Where are FAITH's Certainties?—if Time's best Boasts,
 The Pow'r of Arts, Arms, Numbers, Learning—ALL
 Unite their ineffectual Aid, and prop

In

little mistaken, when he represents the DRUID as shock'd at human Sacrifice, since the Custom of the *Albanians* was probably the very same which the DRUIDS practis'd in *Gaul*, with the same Rites of barbarous Superstition. But for this small Mistake of the CUSTOM, he makes ample amends by the Strength and Beauty of his Drawing.

(334.) Having now drawn his Argument to a Point against IMPLICIT FAITH, by tracing its Weakness through a vast Extent and Duration, and through all its Supports of Arts, Arms, Numbers and Learning, and finding that, with all these Aids, it totters, and is ready to fall with its own Weight, he indulges a little to a poetical Description of its RUIN, as of a Fact certain, though, by the Images and Figures which he employs, he seems to think it a Fact which has often happened, and which will be often repeated.

(340-345.)

In vain the tott'ring Fabric!—tumbling down 335
 Like some vast Ball of gather'd Snow, the Growth
 Of Winter's gloomy Reign, which long had crown'd
 Th' aerial Summit of the Alpine Steep,
 It falls, and with collected Ruin rolls,
 O'erwhelming all but Truth——That still remains 340
 And

(340-345.) In all Systems of Superstition there have ever been mingled some Seeds of TRUTH, which during the Growth and Prevalence of it, like Corn among Weeds, are lost, and smothered; but as that decays, these rise and flourish. TRUTH being of a permanent Nature, and superstition variable, when the former prevails, the Mind is inlightened with Knowledge, and the Heart warmed with Benevolence and natural Affection. This Light and Warmth melts away the Phantoms of Superstition—

————— Soon with Reason's Touch
 Dissolved, as Night's dim Shades in sun-gilt Day. l. 202.

After this Dissolution, some Reformation usually succeeds; in which the Force of Truth being now seen, and acknowledged, prevails at first, and thus Superstition, by means of Truth blended with it, becomes useful; or according to our Poet's allegorical Description,

————— with gradual Change,
 The PROTEAN SNAKE, in Earth's warm lap dissolv'd,
 Glides in a fruitful Stream to bless Mankind.

The Story of PROTEUS is this: He was a King of *Ægypt*, famous for the magic Art, or political Wisdom, according to the Genius of his Time and Country. He therefore understood well how to contrive and manage those TURNS and CHANGES of Superstition, which are signified in this Description. These TURNS and CHANGES were also marked by the Greek Philosopher

D THE

And shines more pure, more radiant in the Wreck
 Spreads its eternal Ray—The hideous Mass
 Receives the Heav'n-fir'd Beam—with gradual Change,
 The *Protean* Snake in Earth's warm Lap dissolved,
 Glides in a fruitful Stream to bless Mankind. 345

Whence then th' imperious, positive Disdain,

That

THEOPHRASTUS ; who, according to CICERO, calls them INCLINATIONES RERUM et MOMENTA TEMPORUM." and in S. S. they are also called " THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES."

(346.) Having shewn the Weakness of IMPLICIT FAITH, and Superstition, the Question here rising from that Discovery is very proper, and equally important : " Why should Men hate, vilify, and persecute each other for Difference of Opinion, in Things, which have no Certainty, nor even Existence in Truth and NATURE," but only in the disordered Imagination of those, who (as our Poet before noted l. 145.)

" Hug their own DAY-DREAMS IDOLISED WITHIN,
 And style them REVELATION ?

And indeed according to our noble PHILOSOPHER, unless we are capable of viewing and reviewing, on all Sides, and in every Light, our Fancies and Imaginations, and of judging and criticising them with a clear and free Mind, we can never be sure of their TRUTH, REALITY, or CONFORMITY with NATURE. " They may, perhaps, be MONSTERS, and not DIVINITIES, or SACRED TRUTHS, which are kept thus choicely consecrated in some dark Corner of the Mind." This solemn Consecration of chimerical Notions is the great Source of BIGOTRY, and especially, when by such WILL-WORSHIP, and blind Idolatry, men attribute, assume, or impute to themselves REAL MERIT : this Deception working and fermenting with Vanity and Vice, raises an excessive and unnatural PRIDE, or spiritual Arrogance, which, by rejecting and disdaining COMMON SENSE,
 GOOD-

That spurns back modest Doubt, and damns Dissent ?

Where the Foundation of that holy Scorn,

Which

GOOD-WILL and GOOD-HUMOUR, renders them intolerable to each other. VIRTUE is hated and virtuous Men persecuted, according as they differ, or are supposed to differ, from certain FORMS of CREEDS, or SYMBOLS of FAITH. This Hatred of Virtue is strangely contrasted ; Men become vicious out of Spite ; while Pride, growing with Vice, by Means of imputed Merit, prompts them to indulge, under all this Deception, a fond HOPE of attaining Happiness in a miraculous or supernatural Way, and as our Poet has strongly expressed it,

—————“ Affect ev’n HEAV’N in SPITE.”

Till at last, Virtue and Vice losing their Distinction, they rest in the latter as most agreeable to NATURE, though it be indeed most contrary to NATURE, and to the LAWS of GOD, which have this authentic Property, that they execute themselves. Hence it happens, that in this Pursuit of chimerical Happiness Men always find themselves disappointed.

—————“ ALL IS VANITY.

“ MEN NEVER ARE, but always TO BE BLEST.”

And hence also is derived another Observation of Fact, which would cease to be true, if Superstition and Bigotry were removed,

“ That even with the Aid of Religion human Nature grows daily
“ more corrupt : so hard it is in any State to find a MAN, who
“ lives NATURALLY, and like a MAN.”

(356.) Our Poet here, as in some other Places, presumes to treat this serious Subject with some Strokes of WIT and HUMOUR. Nor can it be offensive, it is hoped, to the gravest, and most solemn Religionist to see a well-bred orthodox Mouse introduced as refusing, from implicit Faith, and mere Reverence, to touch those miraculous Records, which may be deemed the sacred Reliques of old Eye-sight Proof. Nor can the Poet be

Which lifts the Bigot's Brow to scowl Reproach?
 To rage at Sects, that hurl his Anger back, 350
 And hate him for his Hatred? Vain th' Attempt
 To wound the reachless Sky. the feather'd Shaft
 Returning still falls downward. If nor Time,
 Nor Numbers, who sustain'd th' attested Cause,
 Nor MIRACLES, reserv'd in rev'rend Hoards, 355
 So awful that no sacrilegious Mouse
 Dares satiate Hunger on the dust-veil'd Roll,
 But dies, to leave untouch'd the dry Record!
 If Evidence thus sacred fail of Proof,
 Where? in what dark Recess of Time's deep WELL, 360
 Shall

thought to sin against his ART in characterizing, as a Sort of Profelyte, one of the NIBBLING RACE, when the Zeal of St. ANTHONY is canonised, who thought it not below the Dignity of his divine Legation to convert the MUTE RACE. Such, it seems, is the Effect of that FAITH, which conferred the Title of Saintship on him, who fulfilled the Command of preaching it to EVERY CREATURE.

(360-6.) Amidst all the various Mixtures of Superstition, by which TRUTH has been polluted, our Poet next inquires where it may be found pure and unpolluted.—These Verses contain several Hints, or Allusions to Passages in S. S. of a similar Design and Meaning. JER. ii. 13. &c. JOHN vi. &c. and innumerable other Places which clearly demonstrate that the Doctrine exhibited in those sacred Volumes was designed to overthrow Superstition; and that when we meet with Passages of a different or contrary Tendency, we may boldly pronounce them to be Corruptions and Additions of Fraud and Imposture. This just distinction ought to be made by all who would not deceive themselves or others. The capital Point is, to make S. S. consistent with itself and with

Shall REASON, from the pure untainted Spring,
 Draw living Waters ? In what sacred Pool,
 All daub'd in wand'ring thro' a dirty World,
 Shall th' Heav'n-descended ANGEL, spotless TRUTH,
 Wash her polluted Robes, and naked seen 365
 In native Beauty make the Day more glad ?

What if we seek her in Man's moral Walks ?
 Judge her by Life's try'd Practice ? what more just
 Than to conclude the Saint's uncensur'd Deeds
 Lend Sanction to his Doctrine ? Here, it seems, 370
 TRUTH loves to chuse her TEST. Yet here again
 We wander into new Defect of Plea,
 That proves too much, or Nothing. Cou'd loose Life
 Infer

with Truth : if it be inconsistent with itself, the Authority is made void ; if with Truth, instead of a RULE of FAITH pure, certain, and correspondent with NATURE, it exhibits that Scene of CHAOTIC Discord noted before at l. 179-193 ; and again l. 430-439.

(368.) And here it should seem probable, that they, who LIVE WELL BELIEVE WELL, and that VIRTUE in Practice is a Mark of TRUTH in Opinion.

(373.) Yet this Proof, in Fact, is insufficient. For though in Reality TRUTH and VIRTUE coincide, and mutually fit, or tally with each other, yet they are not the same. Truth is the Conformity of our Perceptions, Ideas and Notions with NATURE : Virtue is the Conformity of our Affections with NATURE. Their Difference therefore arises from the different Powers, or Faculties, from which they are derived. The Sources of the former are in the Understanding, of the latter in the WILL. The Understanding is improved two Ways ; by NATURE and by ART. The first proceeds by Experience and Custom, from which REASON advances by a gradual Progression ; the second
 D 3 by

Infer false FAITH, how stain'd ev'n Christian Zeal !

Where Av'rice and Revenge, and Pride's big Bloat, 375
Taught

by Instruction and Discipline. In both these Ways, when the Process is regular, and according to NATURE, the Mind, either by this single, or united Influence, acquires TRUTH ; and the Affections, following the same Order, correspond, or harmonize, with NATURE, and become virtuous and right. In this Case therefore the Proofs of Truth and Virtue are reciprocal ; true Opinion would infer virtuous Action, and virtuous Action would prove true Opinion. In this Process NATURE seldom deviates ; but Discipline and Instruction often counteract NATURE, according to that Maxim of antient PHILOSOPHY : και οι φιλοσοφοι διδασκ-
τα λεγουσι τα ΚΑΚΑ· ΦΤΕΙΚΑ δε τα ΑΓΑΘΑ*. When this happens either through Mistake or Design, the Opinions derived from it become false, or fantastical, and the Affections, following the same Directions, become unnatural and vicious ; and this always happens in some Degree proportionable to the Prevalence of Superstition, on which such Discipline and Instruction is founded. Nevertheless, as Superstition allows, licences, or indulges Truth and Virtue within certain Bounds, or limits, so far as the GRANT extends, they mutually prove each other, but no farther. Beyond the Limits of the GRANT, TRUTH and VIRTUE become negative Terms, or Signs, which destroy themselves. Thus, if Opinion or FAITH be contrary to the Religious GRANT, or Licence, VIRTUE immediately changes, and becomes VICE, while VICE assumes the NAME and PRAISE of VIRTUE in the orthodox Believer, whose FAITH is fashion'd RITELY, and according to the GRANT or LICENCE. This however is ALL, which Superstition or artificial Religion can effect by this Magical Notation. It can only change the NAME ; not the THING,

* HIEROCLES.

VIRTUE

Taught Guilt's blood-colour'd Hatto hint CHURCH SPITE;
Whence Rapine, Murders, Treach'ries, Perj'ries rise,

Like

VIRTUE, and VICE still ARE, AS THEY ARE; the LAWS of GOD execute themselves notwithstanding: Tho' the Imposition of a false Title has been employed to procure a general Condemnation, while Mankind are doom'd to suffer Death as the punishment of a voluntary Crime, which is only a necessary Condition of their Existence.

———FALSO DAMNATI CRIMINE MORTIS.

The illustrious Mr. FENELON, Archbishop and DUKE of CAMBRAY, † equally famous for Learning, Fine Taste, and Virtue, says, "There are properly speaking but TWO ARTICLES of Religion, THE LOVE OF GOD, AND OBEDIENCE TO THE CHURCH." But JESUS CHRIST, without mentioning the CHURCH, had before recognis'd only TWO ARTICLES of Religion; "THE LOVE OF GOD, and THE LOVE OF MAN." In this FAITH the Agreement with TRUTH and NATURE is perfect; in the other Repugnance, and ev'n Contrariety are possible. The LAW OF GOD, or NATURE obliges us to see, and own a Difference between BLACK and WHITE, BITTER and SWEET, VICE and VIRTUE: But when the CHURCH commands, every Believer who is initiated, inlisted, and inroll'd, is obliged to see and own that BLACK is WHITE, that BITTER is SWEET, and that VICE is VIRTUE. For thus the Religious Accountant calculates, according to his artificial Method of Notation: "MORE TRUTH and VIRTUE added to LESS FAITH, the Sum is LESS MERIT or WICKEDNESS; and "LESS TRUTH and VIRTUE added to MORE FAITH, the Sum "is MORE MERIT or RIGHTEOUSNESS." And thus the Followers of such artificial Religion often find themselves obliged to HATE MAN, whom they HAVE SEEN, under Pretence of LOV-

† See his Life by RAMSAY, p. 341-2.

Like Taints effluient from infectious Fens,
Dispeopling in their Progress ! unaton'd

Till

ING GOD, whom they HAVE NOT SEEN, and according to this Method, whom they NEVER CAN SEE. But this is the common and ev'n necessary Effect of CHURCH DISCIPLINE and IMPLICIT FAITH, or BLIND OBEDIENCE, when they counteract NATURE and the LAW of GOD ! Nevertheless, the good Archbishop, in the midst of contrary and opposite Attractions, always preserved the INTEGRITY and specific IDENTITY of TRUE MANHOOD, by exercising universal LOVE and BENEVOLENCE to ALL MEN, and kept his FAITH, LOYALTY and ALLEGIANCE to GOD entire, tho' sworn to ANOTHER MASTER. Thus it appears the good Man's Deed doth not always, and necessarily prove the Truth of his Belief ; since, when it extends beyond the Limits allow'd, that Connexion is broken, and the Deed becomes cognisable only in the Court of CONSCIENCE, and according to the LAW of NATURE, in which TRUTH and VIRTUE perfectly coincide. These singular appearances, and Characters of the Excess, or Superiority of GOODNESS above TRUTH, are noted by a noble Writer*, who observes, that " GOODNESS many times delights the Soul, in " spite of TRUTH, and so proves a TRANSCENDENT above " it," or as PROCLUS : *το γαρ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ ΚΡΕΙΤΤΟΝ ἔστι τῆς ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΣ.*

But this Transcendence of Goodness is rare ; the contrary Effect is much more common. In great Souls the Native Force, or INSTINCT of Goodness is so predominant, that ev'n in the most unfavourable Circumstances, and under the Influence of the worst Institutions, it operates and prevails against all opposition. In this Case, it is the Effect of a great Genius only, that Goodness seems to operate IN SPIRE of TRUTH ; while others under

* LORD DIGBY. Letters to Sir K. DIGBY.

Till death-bed Sanctity absolves Remorse
 By scar'd Conformity to FAITH's dull Modes,
 The Mock'ries of Belief, and Rotes of Pray'r.

380

Hush!

the same Influence of Superstition are MALEVOLENT in SPITE of TRUTH. This contrary Effect of the same Cause deserves Explanation, as the CONTRAST is conspicuous, and exhibits a moral Picture with the deepest Shades and strongest Expression.

It has been said above, that the Effect of Superstition in corrupting the MORAL SENSE and NATURAL Affection, is NECESSARY. This is certainly so, when the System of Superstition, as there supposed, is received with IMPLICIT FAITH. But in the Good Man, who alone can be properly called the truly GREAT, or HAPPY Genius, this Opposition between TRUTH and VIRTUE, and the Transcendency, or Superiority of the latter above the former, is Apparent only, not Real. He soars above the Clouds of Superstition, which do not hinder him from moving, but only conceal his Motives. He overlooks the dim Prospects of IMPLICIT FAITH; to him those Minuteneßes vanish, and become invisible Points: He believes, and sees, and feels as Things are, truly, and according to NATURE: He is benevolent from Instinct, TASTE, or Temper, improv'd, and matur'd by Reason and Experience. He knows that TRUTH only can make us FREE; and tho' perhaps he doth not always speak, yet he always thinks and acts FREELY. Thus far, but no farther, a wise and good Man may submit to the Tyranny of Superstition. On the other hand, the very Capacity of perceiving Truth excites Malevolence and hatred in a bad Temper, against those especially, who think and speak, and act FREELY. This Freedom is not applicable to Vice, or Licentiousness; which is indeed real Slavery; as it gives the Temper a Bias contrary to NATURE. It is a Freedom from the Bondage of Superstition; which Bondage coincides with Vice. For as Vice consists in a sort of a Serpentine KNOT, or Intertwining of wrong Opinion, wrong Affection, and wrong Action, which
 run

Hush ! the still Silence ! the dead Night of FAITH !
 Thick Darkness, in whose gloomy Shade involv'd,
 Virtue

run into each other ; so this Knot in most Cases is tied, and in all drawn faster, and closer, by the Force of Superstition. The Freedom therefore, which is derived from Truth, is an harmonious Correspondence, or Symphonising with NATURE thro' all the Powers or Faculties of the Mind ; which according to a certain Growth, or progressive Improvement of REASON, being review'd, and recognis'd, become the Sources of right Opinions, of natural Affections, and of reasonable Action. This produces a perfect Consistency, and Agreement in the Mind, when the Imagination, the Will, and the Judgment act in Concord and Harmony with each other ; from which Concord arises that Peace, Security and Acquiescence in the Order of Providence, which is both the Effect and Reward of VIRTUE, and is a State of perfect FREEDOM. This is the Summit, or highest Point of human Perfection and Happiness ; and must necessarily, as we see in fact it doth, produce Envy and Hatred in those, who at the same time see it attain'd by others, and feel their own Inability of attaining it. Now tho' all Men, the Poor as well as the Rich, the Ignorant and the Wise, have the Ability of attaining it, and do indeed naturally tend to this Point, yet that Tendency is perverted, in some by the Predominance of some particular Passion, and in all by the Prevalence of Superstition, which gives Force and Malignity to every Passion. When a Man is thus trammel'd, he is compell'd to draw. He frets ; he rages ; yet deserves to be pitied, ev'n when most outrageous. And he wou'd well deserve it, if that Rage only hurt himself, and if it were not often directed against the Innocent and Virtuous. Then what Disguisements ! What Struggles ! What Distortions ! to conceal his Pain ; to dissemble Truth ; to recommend Falshood ? Genius, Knowledge, Learning, if they are not strong enough to counteract the Venom, always render it more Powerful and Malignant. If a Writer ;
 the

Virtue and Vice lie cancell'd; NATURE's Face
One universal Blot!—The muddy Stream

385

Re-

the Poison, not of Asps, but of the mad Dog “ is under his Lips.” He snaps and bites at all he meets. He is reduced at last to the lowest and most abject State of Slavery; to see Truth, which he dares not own, and to commend Virtue, which he cannot practice. He therefore hates FREE-THINKING; because “ it belongs to a FREE MAN only to speak TRUTH.”
ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤ *γὰρ ἀνδρός τ' ΑΛΗΘΕ λέγειν.* MENANDER.

(373.) Thus the Proof of Truth from Virtue is sufficient. But if the Argument be converted, and False FAITH be inferr'd from vicious Action, here it seems to prove too much; since it proves the falshood ev'n of the most orthodox Christian FAITH, —It must be own'd however that this Excess of Proof is only apparent, and in this particular Case; for all Vice is owing to false Opinion, either implicit, or explicit, or else to unnatural Affection, or Passion, derived from false Opinion.—Our Poet uses the Argument ad Hominem; and the Christians, here characteris'd, are not REAL, but only NOMINAL.

(376.) This also may be illustrated with an Example. “ The FATHERS” (as they are called) “ are said sometimes to have mention'd the Earthquake which defeated the Attempt of JULIAN in rebuilding the Temple at *Jerusalem*, only to support some favourite Point of Doctrine. So AMBROSE, it seems, urg'd this Miracle to THEODOSIUS, to confirm the important Doctrine of Persecution.” It was well (says a certain great CHAMPION of IMPLICIT FAITH, from whom this Account is taken;) it was “ WELL THIS MIRACLE was performed by GOD, to DO HONOUR to HIMSELF.” for if it had been performed to do HONOUR to the Bishops of the CHURCH, they seem not to have deserved it; since one of them excited his Flock, (poor Lambs!) to burn a *Jewish* Synagogue. The Fact was justified by AMBROSE, on the Authority of this Miracle, with a modest HINT to THEODOSIUS,

TO

Reflects no Flow'r; no chearful Verdure smiles
O'er the gay Mead—Ev'n Pride reluctant falls

Back

“ TO REMEMBER THE FATE OF JULIAN.” Now what may be suppos'd to be the Cause of the good FATHER's Zeal? Why, Complaint being made to THEODOSIUS, that the Christians, by Instigation of their Bishop, had burnt a *Jewish* Synagogue, the Emperor punished their outrageous Violence, and decreed the Prelate to rebuild the CHURCH or TEMPLE, at his OWN EXPENCE. This mild Decree may seem, perhaps partiality to the Bishop, rather than Justice to the Injur'd: Yet the good Bishop, (it seems) was offended; the good FATHER too was offended; ALL PRIESTS are offended; and, as if it was a mere Train of Gunpowder, the Resentment catches from one End of the HIERARCHY to the other. Nay ev'n our CHAMPION himself, Friend as he is of TRUTH and LIBERTY, seems offended: For (says he) “ THE IMPIETY “ OF THIS SENTENCE OFFENDED AMBROSE.” But the same accurate Writer says also, that THEODOSIUS by this Decree “ SUPPORTED THE NATURAL RIGHTS of MANKIND.” How then cou'd the DECREE be IMPIOUS? But the learned Writer's Argument is wonderfully contrasted; for JULIAN (he says) VIOLATED those same NATURAL RIGHTS with IMPIETY, which THEODOSIUS with IMPIETY SUPPORTED. The latter is Impious because he punish'd the most outrageous Violation of NATURAL RIGHT; and the former, because he punish'd no religious SECT, but tolerated both CHRISTIAN and JEW; whom he exhorted to exercise their Religion peaceably, and only hinder'd them from persecuting each other. But this Toleration, it seems, was a Violation of these NATURAL RIGHTS which are supported by Toleration; or in plain Words, this TOLERATION was INTOLERATION. To allow the free Exercise of a Religion instituted by GOD himself (as this Writer may be supposed to believe) was Persecution; and to rebuild a Temple, of which the very Form, and Model, as well as the

Worship,

Back on itself, and like the Viper's Brood,
 Self-feeding, self-consum'd, leaves Heav'n unfill'd 390
 With

Worship, was appointed by GOD, and intended, and declar'd by that Appointment to last for EVER, was IMPIOUS REBELLION against the SAME GOD, who also became his OWN SON in order not to destroy, but to fulfill his OWN WILL. " But (he adds very justly) it has always been the TRICK, " and has often prov'd the FOLLY, of INTOLERANTS to " place their miserable Principles on such Foundations, as are " found most of all to discredit it." Whether this learned THEOLOGIST be a TOLERANT, or INTOLERANT, doth not plainly appear, while under the Magic of his wonder-working Art, and with a sort of wanton Protervity, he thus changes and transforms at Pleasure the FACE of NATURE, as well as his OWN.

ET VULTUS NIMIUM LUBRICUS ASPICI.

Meantime we may be allow'd, peradventure, to guess some miserable Principle lies obscurely lurking between those two Extremes of Tolerance and Intolerance, of Christian CHARITY, and Priestly BIGOTRY. Is it DULLNESS, or SOPHISTRY, or FREE-THINKING? The ingenious Gentleman, it is presumed, will choose the second; for he loves WIT it seems, yet hates FREE-THINKING. And thus having ONCE reduced this PROTEUS to his original SERPENTINE FORM, he may now employ himself according to his Kind, in licking the Dust of old Tombs and consecrated Bones, and in feeding on the Reliques of sepulchral Superstition. (See a Book intitled JULIAN, p. 65, 99, &c.)

JULIAN, a Heathen Emperor, HENRY IV. of FRANCE, a Christian King, with many others of greatest Name and Dignity, among whom a German Emperor (who was poisoned in receiving the Sacrament) have been supposed to have fallen a Sacrifice to CHURCH SPITE. And in a neighbouring Nation, when lately the Parliament of PARIS attempted to restrain the BIGOTRY

With Saints, and VANITY is given in VAIN !
 Yet in this Gloom of unapparent Night,

GOTRY of the CLERGY, and the King was suspected to favour the Attempt, the ecclesiastical Champions bid him REMEMBER HENRY IV. and in this they religiously imitated the Modesty, the Charity, and the Piety of AMBROSE.

(383-4.) We have seen above (Note l. 360.) that one Effect of IMPLICIT FAITH and Superstition, is to change VIRTUE into VICE, and in the last Note, we have seen an Example of it. This indeed, in our own Country, and at this Time, may seem strange; but once there was a Time when this Effect was more common, and almost universal. That Time our Poet calls,

—————the dead NIGHT of FAITH.

When ev'n the most active Passions became silent, Men were then in general too listless to affect ev'n SAINTSHIP, while the few who indulged that Vanity were disappointed. And as that is the Meridian of TRUTH and VIRTUE; in which Pope has fix'd the Height of human Felicity;

“ THE ONLY POINT where HUMAN BLISS STANDS STILL,”

So this was the opposite Point, or MIDNIGHT of Error and Vice, and consequently, of Misery and Wretchedness. And here one is tempted to wish that in this long Night BIGOTRY had slept for ever. But it always rises again at the DAWN of TRUTH, while as this advances, ENVY and SPITE attend its Progress, and Zeal and Persecution kindle their Flames at the LIGHT of HEAVEN. It is either in the Moonlight of Superstition, or in the Dawn of Knowledge, when these monstrous FORMS appear most terrible. Then it is, that jealous of the Growth of REASON, and prevalence of TRUTH, the Managers of Superstition, under Pretence of restraining Heresy, Infidelity and Atheism, would willingly restrain also all FREE THOUGHT. With

—this

If but one Spark of VIRTUE or FAIR TRUTH,
 Struggling breaks thro' th' incumbent Shade, awak'd
 From inexistant Slumber starts up soon

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The

this Intention, their Discipline is extended to that early Age and weak State of human NATURE, which is incapable of Choice and Judgment. Here they lay the Foundation of IMPLICIT FAITH; here they lay their Leaven, their Poison, the vermicular Egg, which grows with Nature, and like a worm in the Bud, consumes or corrupts the future Fruit; while even INFANTS are lifted and sworn by Proxy into a CREED, and marked with an invisible SIGN, without which they are deemed unqualified for social Duties, and incapable of Happiness. So also the purest and most sincere Virtue, without a Licence, or TICKET from the Priest, is excommunicated from the Favour of GOD and MAN, while Vice, it seems, with that Passport, is duly qualified to receive both.

There happened, it is said, a great Quarrel between the celebrated Mr. PRIOR and Dr. ATTERBUY, DEAN of *Westminster* and Bishop of *Rocheſter*. They were walking together in the Abby, when an Occasion offered which produced the following Verses, *ex tempore* :

- " As the Verger came up to the Bishop he said,
- " The Gossips are ready, the Cushions are laid :
- " What ! without my Consent, quoth the Bishop, inflamed,
- " Go ; shut up the Font : LET THE INFANT BE DAMN'D.

The Poet, we see, very freely, and very justly ridicules a Doctrine, priestly indeed, but not Christian, and equally CRUEL and CHIMERICAL. This illustrious Prelate, it seems, was a Realist in this Doctrine, though not in VIRTUE ;* he could not

* See his Sermon on I CORINTH. iv. 19. and the Preface, &c.

The MONSTER huge, assuming horrid Forms
Of Persecution mask'd with pious Zeal.

Then

bear a jest on so serious a Subject as Damnation : which, if such Wit was allowed, would be denounced only against the Vicious, not against the Innocent and Virtuous. This would neither be agreeable to the Will, nor favourable to the Authority of those, who, for the Good of Mankind, assume the Power to damn or save. So the Bishop's Resentment was everlasting ; and well it might, for the Ridicule here has all the Edge of WIT, and all the Weight of TRUTH, which no Mortal can bear, who, like the Bishop, has WIT without TRUTH, and nothing but the Armour of Superstition to defend him : though this, it must be owned, may sometimes save the Champion from being hit, as, in HOMER, the HERO was saved by the Interposition of a Cloud †.

Another Way, in which Superstition falsifies the LAWS of GOD, and assumes the Power of Damnation, or (which is the same) of Excommunication, is in the Case of FORNICATION. Here in the Interpretation of a Word, it often happens that the Law of NATURE, or Commandment of GOD is turned into a CRIME. Now the Law of NATURE, respecting the UNION of the Sexes in human Kind, is plainly this, That they be mutually faithful to each other. This in the papal Scheme of Religion is called a SACRAMENT ; and it is truly so called : being a Covenant or Oath of mutual Allegiance or Fidelity, of which GOD above and Conscience can be Witnesses. The Force or Obligation of this Covenant is founded in the Constitution of the human Mind, which being endued with great Sensibility with regard to the Causes, or Motives of Love, and Esteem, is rendered capable of greater Degrees of Pleasure or Pain, of Happiness or Misery, on this Account, than perhaps any other. This Sensibility is always seen more pure and simple, and therefore more delicate

† Iliad iii.

Then not the good Man's Deed avails to prove
Suspected FAITH, but presuppos'd Belief,

Unequal

and refined, in Proportion as following NATURE backward we view Man in his original State, before he was corrupted by artificial Institutions, and arbitrary Restraints. This original Sensibility is wonderfully express'd in MILTON. This is one of those universal Beauties in that divine Poet, which being founded in NATURE, not in CHIMERA would deserve and gain the unanimous Admiration of Mankind. "It is observable (says Mr. VOLTAIRE) that in all other Poems Love is represented "as a VICE, in MILTON only it is a Virtue. The Pictures he "draws of- it are naked, as the Persons of whom he speaks and "as venerable." He removes with a chaste Hand the Veil, "which covers every where else the Enjoyments of that Passion. "There is Softness, Tenderness, and Warmth, without Lasciviousness. The Poet transports us into that State of Innocence "and Happiness, in which ADAM and EVE continued for a short "Time; he soars not above human, but above corrupt Nature; "and as there is no Instance of such Love, there is none of such "Poetry." Such is the Description of a Passion, which is the Origin of Society; and if there be indeed few who are capable of conceiving or expressing it in its original Purity and Simplicity, it is because they draw not from the Fountain, but from certain Reservoirs, which become stagnant and impure with the Mud and Filth of Superstition. The INDIANS, both Eastern and Western, were remarkable for their conjugal Fidelity, before they were corrupted by their Intercourse with the Europeans; so that it appears to be a natural Instinct implanted in Man by the Deity as the Source of social Happiness. 'Such then is the Law of NATURE concerning the Union of the Sexes, so clearly, so strongly, and so universally felt, that it may seem not only absurd, but even impious in any Order of Men to assume an Authority to grant Licence of doing that, which contains in itself the

E
Force

Unequal Substitute, must prove the Deed,
Then Excommunication's reachful Hand,

400

Like

Force of a natural or divine Law and Obligation. It is absurd to suppose Leave or Licence is necessary to perform or fulfill a perfect Right, and Duty; and it is impious to suppose a Power of Prohibition exists against a Duty, which if prohibited, Mankind could not exist. But where there is a Power to permit, there is a Power also to prohibit; neither of which can be properly applied in Duties, but only in Things indifferent, or criminal. NATURE in this Case is the only Security; and it arises from false Policy, and the busy Interposition of Priests, who are always crossing the Purposes of NATURE, and PROVIDENCE, that of all Parts of the World, the *European* Nations are the most dissolute and incontinent; and from this particular Corruption, which now is become general, arises many other Corruptions. The very Name of MATRIMONY includes all the Relations of FATHER, and MOTHER, of HUSBAND and WIFE, of CHILDREN, of BROTHER, and SISTER; and of all the familiar CHARITIES, and social Friendships, which arise from customary Necessitude. This is the first Link in that Chain * which holds together civil Society, which if it be broken by Incontinence and Infidelity, the whole Chain, which is composed of many such Links, is in Fact broken too. There can be no civil or public Union, where there is no private, familiar, or matrimonial Union. All other Laws † are useless, and ineffectual. But MATRIMONY is not an external or artificial FORM, but a NATURAL or substantial FORM. NATURE itself, or the LAW of GOD, bounds, or determines it. Where there is a MOTHER, there is always MATRIMONY; unless by human Artifice the natural Connexion be broken: and if we take the pains to range

* Prima Societas in ipso est Conjugio. Id autem est Principium Urbis, & quasi Seminarum Reipub. CIC.

† QUID LEGES SINE MORIBUS? HOR.

together

Like mad MEDEA's unrelenting Rage,
With Amputations strows the Road to GOD!

Excludes

together in Order, the Ideas and Sentiments, which arise on this Subject, the true Essence, or Definition of MATRIMONY may be thus expressed: "It is the Union, or Communion of ONE MAN with ONE WOMAN, arising from natural Affection, certified and established by free Consent, confirmed by Tye, and sanctified by mutual Fidelity, for social Happiness." The Priest therefore, who excommunicates, or damns a Person, who fulfills this Duty, without his LEAVE, denounces Damnation against a Virtue, the simplest, the purest, and most perfect, entirely conformable to the Law of GOD, and to the Order and Welfare of civil Society. The Presumption, so strongly mark'd, according to his Manner, by the tragic Poet, in the Case of poor OPHELIA, is here much aggravated:

—————Lay her i' th' Earth;
And from her pure and unpolluted Flesh
May Vi'lets spring! I tell thee, churlish Priest,
A min'string ANGEL shall my SISTER be,
When thou liest howling. SHAKESPEARE.

On the other hand the FORM or ESSENCE of FORNICATION is this: "It is the promiscuous Commixture of many Men with one Woman, without natural Affection, without Fidelity, and without regard to the Care of Children, or of social Happiness." Fornication therefore can rarely be committed by one Man and one Woman only; since it supposes Prostitution either merely brutal, or, as the Word denotes,* gainful; It differs from a Rape, because the one supposes Consent, the other Force. It differs also from Adultery, because the one supposes a

* It is derived from the Greek Word *πορνεία* the Force of which will be understood from the following Observations.

Excludes the new-born INFANT'S UNWASH'd Smile,
 And damns unlicens'd VIRTUE EV'N IN HEAV'N ! 405
 Since

Breach of conjugal Fidelity, the other not ; it neither arises from pure Affection, nor produces it ; and therefore is neither conformable to NATURE, nor to social or civil Happiness. Mere Lust is brutal ; and in a Creature so constituted as MAN, while in a natural State he remained untaught, and uncorrupted, never did, and never could operate, without a Mixture of other Affections, which purify and refine it. Since then the Nature of Man, and of civil Society in particular, seem to direct and to require a Purity and Integrity of Manners, in Opposition to Incontinence, and Prostitution, how comes it to pass that so general a Corruption should prevail, which in fact cuts off many of the natural Sources of human Happiness both private and public ?

The Answer to this Question is not, perhaps, very obvious. It must be owned however that the Corruption, here noted, is confined to the *European* Provinces, where indeed it seems general ; unless it be extended also to those Regions, which have received the Infection from the Influence of *European* Manners ; which now indeed is almost every where. The other Parts of the Globe remain free from this Corruption.

The *European* Climates have in all Ages bred a Race of Men more hardy and bold, more inquisitive and adventurous, and of a Genius more various and versatile, than the other Parts of the Globe. As their natural Disposition wou'd render them more sensible of Wants, so also more capable of contriving Ways to gratify them. Moreover a certain Inequality is observed in the Number of Births, in which the Males exceed the Females. This Inequality, if original and constant, as seems probable, affords a sufficient Answer to the Question. The same Genius, and together with it, the same Inequality, extended along the Coasts of *Asia Minor*, and so perhaps to *Egypt* ; while Eastward thro' all the Regions of *Asia*, a contrary inequality seems to have prevailed : where a greater Number of Females gave

Since then bad Life must leave no Stain on FAITH;
Neither Life's Purity refines coarse CREEDS,

Nor

Rise to the Custom of Polygamy, which always did, and doth yet to this Day prevail in the Eastern Countries. This reciprocal Inequality gave rise also to a most remarkable Difference between the *Europeans*, and Eastern *Asiatic* Sages, Philosophers, or Legislators, in their Moral, Religious, or Mythological Institutions, Descriptions and Representations. For in one Part the Females being too soft, and dissolute, and in the other the Males too fierce, and rough, hence it happened that, There, the Origin of the EVIL was derived from WOMAN, while Here, every GRACE and every VIRTUE was represented in a Female Form, and receiv'd a feminine Appellation. This Observation might be extended much farther; but this may seem sufficient to make us remember that Manners and Customs have often a deep Foundation in Nature, and that it belongs to Philosophers and Legislators to observe that Foundation, when they attempt to describe or regulate the Order, the Connexions, and the Consequences of human Actions.

Let us now return to the Question. The Excess of Males, co-operating with their bold and adventurous Spirit, at first wou'd produce Rapes, but never Fornication, till the customary Necessitudes of Neighbourhood, and mutual Intercourse of Friendships rendering odious by Degrees such Violation of natural Right and Freedom of Consent, as the frequent Quarrels and Slaughter of those who defended, and of those who reveng'd that Violation, wou'd render it dangerous; they were taught at last, or rather compell'd by necessity to relieve their Wants among Strangers. Thus Traffick begun, and Commerce with Foreigners; and the first Traffick was made with female Slaves, who were either bought, or stolen, or forc'd away from their native Country, expos'd to sale in a strange Land, where they again prostituted themselves for hire, to supply the Want of Females. From this servile Condition, and mercenary Prostitution, the Name of

Nor can the good Man's Virtue church his Claim.
If otherwise ; then the same Light of Heav'n

Dividing

Fornication is derived. And indeed every degree of Subjection, which excludes Freedom of choice, corrupts the Sanctity, and so destroys the Essence of Matrimony, and turns it into Fornication. Matrimony, as was said before, receives its Sanction from the united Powers of natural Affection or free Choice, of Use, and of Fidelity. Where the first is wanting, the last, perhaps, is rarely found ; and where the last is wanting, the Wife, however authoris'd, becomes a legal Strumpet.

Such then, was the Source of Fornication, derived, as it seems, from the Inequality of the Sexes. And in general it may be observed, that where the Number of the Males exceeds the Females, there Fornication is customary : where the contrary Order prevails, there Polygamy.

Nevertheless the same Causes, which in the Order of Nature, and by divine Providence, produced this partial Evil, have produced also a much greater and more general Good ; for they extended Commerce, and mutual Exchange of Conveniences between the most distant Regions ; and together with that, it is our own Fault, if, in the same gradual Progression, Knowledge and Virtue, and universal Benevolence be not equally extended ; so that the whole Globe may become ONE Empire, and human Kind the Subjects and Citizens under the Dominion of ONE King, the SUPREME LORD and Governor of the UNIVERSE. But the same Error, or Craft of political Superstition, and artificial Religion, which hath augmented this partial Evil into a general Corruption, have hitherto retarded the Progression of Knowledge and Virtue ; while the former hath been chiefly applied in contriving Means to promote Luxury, and by converting the latter into a meer Name, hath substituted in its stead I know not what monstrous, and unnatural Form, or pretense of Religion, which hath turned Vice into a Trade, and sanctified Wars and Treasons, Tyranny, and Persecution.

Thus

Dividing Night from Day with equal Bound 410
 Marks the true-named CHURCH's general PALE,
 The

Thus the Corruption, which at first may seem to have been necessary, by degrees became voluntary, and at length necessary again, when it receiv'd Authority and Sanction from religious Institutions. For in the earliest Times as the Worship of dead Men deified prevailed, the Rites, and Ceremonies, and religious Festivals instituted to their Honour, consecrated Lewdness, and made it meritorious. And when the Merchant-Adventurers of this precious Commodity had brought from beyond Sea a beautiful VIRGIN to the Island CYTHERA, she there received the Name of that Island; and because the People knew not her Birth, or Country, they were taught to believe that she arose in a miraculous Manner from the FOAM of the Sea, so she became a Goddess, and was the vulgar or popular VENUS, the Patroness of Lewdness and Fornication. The Poets and Painters indeed, and after them the Virtuosi or Philosophers chastised and refined this Notion, till at last they converted it into a mythical, or allegorical Person, who was supposed to communicate to the Products of NATURE and to the Works of ART, their proper GRACE and BEAUTY. This Species of Vice however, notwithstanding these Refinements, became general and extensive, and was the necessary Effect, and Consequence of that political Superstition, which introduced the Worship of deified Mortals, and will always prevail, in proportion as the same Superstition prevails; which being founded in Ignorance, and implicit FAITH, must necessarily check the Growth of Reason and Free-Thought, and cherish and indulge the grosser Passions. MOSES, the Hebrew Lawgiver, and the Jewish Prophets, who alone seem to have understood, and follow'd his System, (for the Priests either did not understand, or corrupted it) have strongly mark'd this Connexion between MAN-Worship and Vice, and particularly with a just Severity have characterised that Lewdness, which is the Effect of it; insomuch,

The WORLD is then ONE CHURCH; ONE TRUTH'S
known CLAIM :

And VIRTUE only holds the SACRED BRANCH,

Pluck'd

 that they denote by the same Term of Fornication or Whoredom, both the Worship itself; and the Debauchery, which attended it. The Christians, contrary to the Design of their Founder, have run into the same Corruption, by worshipping HIM as GOD, who always called himself a MAN; of which Truth indeed there needs no other Proof, than his Birth and Death. He rejected both the Priestly and Kingly Office: *ἐκλυτον ἐκείνους* : tho' he had, it seems, the indelible Character. This Obstinacy, or Constancy, drew upon him the Effects of a most inconsistent Hatred, and produced a Superstition equally inconsistent. He was punished as a SLAVE, and worship'd as a GOD. He was deified after his Death; which however was not intended before; For all that the Genius of *Judaism* allow'd, was, that having SEEN GOD, like MOSES, he became authoris'd, like *Moses* to be in PLACE of GOD. But this Principle being now extended, it happened, that whereas that Privilege belonged to the latter during Life only, it belonged to the former for ever. This great Change effectually determined the *Jewish* dispensation, and at the same time as effectually accommodated it to the Genius of Heathenism. The Heathens in Fact presently understood this Deification, and as readily admitted it. Accordingly they represented the Christians, in their MYSTERIES, as exercising the same abominable Lewdness which had been exercised in their own: For at this Time, partly by the Censure and Ridicule of the Free-Thinking Philosophers those Scenes of Lewdness, exhibited in the Heathen MYSTERIES, had been restrained, and the MYSTERIES themselves, in consequence of this Refinement of Taste, and gradual Progression of Reason, and natural Politeness, some of them had been reformed, and others abolished, by the Authority of the Civil Magistrate.

Pluck'd from the TREE of LIFE, that points to HEAV'N!
Turks, Jews, wild Afra's Woodmen, India's Mopes, 415
 Who

gistrate. These Mysteries were acted in the Night; and the frequent Lewdness practised in these religious Masquerades gave occasion to the old Comic Poets to lay the Scene of their Plays, and form their Plots; which, as they imitated or represented by Action in a public Manner, and so render'd odious, or ridiculous, what was there acted privately, and under Pretence of Religion, seem to have fallen under the Penalties of Law, which made it Capital to revile what was transacted in those solemn Assemblies. Hence it happened, that being forbid to expose these Corruptions, they became more harmless and innocent (as we say) in their Draughts. This Restraint of the ancient Comedy is observed by HORACE*; and before him CICERO † had declared his Abhorrence of these MYSTERIES, since the Poets were compelled to spare Vice now it was thus cherished and protected by Religion. Those faint and languid Descriptions, or rather Hints, of Vice, were very disagreeable to the free Genius of this wonderful MAN, who was a most sincere and ardent Lover of VIRTUE, as derived from Liberty and the Exercise of Reason, and Free Thought. He exposed with a just abhorrence, and free Indignation, Vice of every kind, as appears in his characteristic Draughts of the Manners of CATALINE, of CLODIUS, and of M. ANTHONY; for he lived in an Age when the Roman Nobility were degenerated from the Virtues of their Forefathers. This rendered him odious; and he fell at last a Sacrifice as much to the Cause of TRUTH and VIRTUE, as of LIBERTY and his Country. Nothing enrages Men of profligate Manners so much as free Censure of their Vices. They cannot bear

* ————— Chorufque

Turpiter obliquit, sublato jure NOLENDI, ad PISONES.

† Quid mihi displaceat, INNOCENTES Poetæ indicant
 Comici. CIC. DE LEG. II.

Ridicule

Who pine in supererrogating Fear,
And shudder but to crush the trodden Fly ;

Australia's

Ridicule. Their Passions, their Opinions, their Manners, and their Actions, are all contrary to Truth and Nature. They hate those who discover that Contrariety ; and wou'd hate themselves too, if Superstition did not supply means of Commutation, and, which is yet a greater Comfort, of Recrimination. This double Comfort the Heathens found in their Superstition, and as Superstition supplied the Means, so these supported them in their Superstition against the Freedom and Ridicule of the first Christians. They did not dislike their Rites, their Ceremonies, or their Mysteries ; for many of them imitated their own. These then, when similar, they cou'd easily recognise ; and when new, or dissimilar, as easily adopt, but they hated them for the Purity of their Manners, and the precise Reservedness, and unsociable Singularity of their Behaviour : Nor was this Purity of Manners in the first Christians derived from those Rites, or Ceremonies, or Mysteries ; but from that strong Renitence, or Resentment, which always succeeds, when the Force of bad Habit, or Custom, beginning to abate, Vice becomes odious, and natural Affection returns. For the great Difference between meer Custom, or vicious Custom and NATURE, is apparent, and operates strongly in all religious Revolutions. The former decays, and abates ; the latter is strengthened, and confirmed by TIME. This Abatement of vicious Custom, at the Time here hinted, was derived from the gradual Progression of REASON, and Free-Thinking, which rising first from the inquisitive Genius of the Grecian Philosophers, was extended by Degrees to all Parts of the World, along the several Lines of Communication, which all centred in ROME. By this means People every where saw the Folly and Absurdities of their several ancient and established Superstitions ; and when they saw the Absurdity, they soon grew tir'd of the customary Vices, which were connected with it. And hence they went
with

Australia's Art, untasting Solitudes,
Where all Ambition's Wealth is Ease from Care ;

Columbia's

with eagerness into a NEW Religion, which merely on Account of Novelty and Singularity, had yet gained no Connexion with Vice. But this Purity of Manners, or Virtue of the first Christians seemed rather to be a foreign Branch, adopted, or ingrafted, than a natural Shoot. For tho' Virtue was indeed inculcated, and commanded by the first Messengers, or Missionaries of the Gospel, yet it was *never taught*. The People were never made to see, and recognise those Principles, by which it is connected with NATURE. It was only an accidental Effect of Novelty co-operating with IMPLICIT FAITH. So the graft never took. There was indeed Contiguity ; but not Connexion. The Principle of Life, and growth was wanting. When therefore the Force of Novelty abated, the customary Virtue abated too, tho' IMPLICIT FAITH continually increased and augmented ; and the Christians gradually reverted into all that Corruption and Lewdness, which they had before ridiculed and abhor'd ; of which among the Gentiles we have here attempted to shew the Source and Progress.

But as the Christians gradually reverted into those Corruptions, the Excess of which by exciting Aversion, Indignation and Abhorrence, prepar'd the Way for the Propagation of the Gospel ; so we find a particular Instance ev'n of a greater * Degree of Vice, which had prevailed among them, than had been commonly known among the Gentiles. It may seem strange, perhaps, that either of these shou'd happen at any Time among a People who believe, or who pretend to believe, the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, and who accordingly live under the Hope and Fear of eternal Reward and Punishment ; and stranger yet, that the latter shou'd happen, when the Force of Novelty was added,

I CORINTH. V.

under

*Columbia's many-peopled bow'ry Groves,
Shading in feathery Pomp her tawny Tribes*

420

From

under the immediate Direction of an Inspired Missionary, and ev'n under the irresistible Conviction of Apostolical Miracles. But perhaps the guilty Person was only a nominal Christian, and associated with the true Believers with a malicious Design to disgrace and betray them. Or if he was indeed a Christian, the Crime might be derived from an erroneous Imitation of St. PAUL himself, who tho' he both dissuaded others, and himself abstained from the customary, or legal Forms of Marriage, yet had "a SISTER, a WIFE,* as well as the other Apostles." By the Word SISTER he seems to mean a Believer; † which meaning I chuse rather than that which includes a natural Relation, and so wou'd infer Incest; and tho' it must be confessed, it is not impossible that even the latter might be the Case in fact, when we consider, that the Design of the Christian was only to fulfill the *Mosaic* Dispensation, by restoring Mankind to their natural Freedom; and that PAUL, being a Jew, as well as all who believe the *Mosaic* Account of the Creation, cou'd not indeed esteem the Matrimonial Union of Brother and Sister to be incestuous, nor ever judge that to be sinful, which at the Beginning was necessary. It must be own'd, however, that this Necessity, tho' (as I believe) it hath never been objected, yet is indeed the strongest Objection that can be made to the *Mosaic* Cosmogony, as it infers a manifest Inconsistency between That and the subsequent Institution, in which such Union is declared to be incestuous. And thus much concerning the Rise, the Progress and Essence of Fornication.

Now concerning the Remedies, which have been apply'd to this Corruption, it is plain they have all prov'd ineffectual. The Remedy exhibited, at the Beginning of the Christian Institution, did not in fact answer the Intention of Cure; and since that

* 1 CORINT. ix. 5. † *id.* vi. 6. vii. 15, & passim.

From the Sun's burning Ray ; cold *Zembla's* Cotts
Of fish-fed Shiv'ers, furr'd in shaggy Mail,

Trampling

Time the Cure itself seems not to have been intended. In the first Case the Remedy did not correspond with the Intention, because it did not correspond with NATURE. It was founded only in positive Command and Implicit Faith. But IMPLICIT FAITH, tho' it hath, as we see in the Effects of Bigotry and Persecution, great Force, when it co-operates with the Passions, in rendering them more Malignant, yet hath in fact very little, or no Moment in some Cases, when it acts, or is intended to act in a contrary Direction ; and in other Cases when the Passions are excessive, or vehement, it ev'n co-operates with them, as before, and augments their Moment. And the Reason is plain ; for when it intentionally co-operates with Passion, the Imagination, which is already corrupted, immediately suggests, without Conviction, the Opinion of Obedience to the Will of GOD ; which Opinion by sanctifying the Passion, renders it more Malignant. And thus it always actuates Bigots, in whom it fomenta a greater Degree of furious and outrageous Malevolence, than cou'd possibly be excited by a simple and compounded Passion, even in the fiercest Barbarian. But when Implicit Faith acts, or at least is intended to act, in a Direction contrary to Passion, being, as it always is, without Conviction, it produces no constant Sentiment, or Feeling, but only by a temporary and sudden Opposition of other Passions, either of HOPE or FEAR, the Mind or WILL, takes a certain BENT, or turn, in which the vicious Passion seems to receive a momentary Check, by the Force of implicit Faith, which seems also to act in a contrary Direction. But it only seems ; for the Mind or Will, being thus forc'd without conviction, by a quick Return, presently exerts the morbid Passion, like an Arrow from a Bow, with greater Force and Violence.

If this Phenomenon be here truly reported as experimental and verified in Fact, the following Observations will deserve to be consider'd, and established as fundamental Truths in Morality.

I. That

Trampling the ice-bound Ocean, whiten'd o'er
With Frost induring, and eternal Snow :

425

All

1. That all Superstition founded in implicit Faith is directly opposite and contrary to Virtue ; as it necessarily tends to foment and strengthen the vicious and unnatural Passions, and to render them more malignant. And hence it happens that in all Institutions, Moral, Civil, or Religious, Vice is augmented by the very Means which are intended to cure it.

2. That even the MORAL SENSE, and the NATURAL AFFECTIONS derived from it, tho' when considered as a System or Constitution of human Nature, they are manifestly intended by the Supreme Creator and Governor, to point the Way, and direct to Virtue and Happiness, yet singly, or without a Regulator, are insufficient to preserve a due Balance necessary to that Purpose, and to give them Constancy, Stability and Security. For customary Virtue, or Obligation derived from the Moral Sense only, is indeed IMPLICIT FAITH ; but It is IMPLICIT FAITH founded in NATURE ; not as Superstition, in Chimeras. The former therefore tends to the Perfection of Nature ; the latter to the Corruption. But as the Implicit Faith, or customary Error of Superstition, renders the unnatural Passions more malignant, so the Implicit Faith, or customary Enthusiasm of the Moral Sense, sometimes renders the natural Affections excessive. I say *sometimes*, but not *always*, nor often. Perhaps it would *never* produce that Effect, if the cross Operations of Superstition were totally removed. It wants therefore a Regulator, to balance the Movement ev'n in a natural State ; and much more when it sinks under the unnatural Pressure of Superstition. This Regulator is REASON or FREE THOUGHT ; which discovering in the Constitution of Things the means and the End, recognises the LAW of NATURE, or WILL of GOD, and shews the Connexion between Truth, Virtue and Happiness, while Conscience arising from that Review and Recognition, becomes

All among these who love not Vice, draw Claim
From Lives of simplest Sanctity to Heav'n,

And

a voluntary Obligation, and MAN a free Subject of the LORD
of NATURE.

3. Hence it happens also, that the BIGOT, or superstitious Religionist, whose Religion is founded only in IMPLICIT FAITH, views and represents human Nature as corrupt, though the Corruption indeed either is not in NATURE, but in the Medium, through which it is view'd ; or else is first introduced by Superstition, and then augmented by that which is pretended to be a Cure.

4. Hence also may be discovered the Cause and Essence of that, which in S. S. is noted as a Secret under the Name of the "MYSTERY of INIQUITY." This Secret, or Mystery, is in Fact nothing more than the necessary Effect of Superstition, in corrupting Mankind, as here described, and of the Application of wrong Means in curing, which indeed increase and augment it.

MANDEVILLE, the Author of "the Fable of the Bees," in various Instances, characterizes truly, and ridicules this Corruption, which yet, by an habitual Mistake of implicit Faith, arising from the Corruption itself, he represents as natural. He felt the Force of this Possession in himself, and saw it in others ; but saw not the Cause. He acknowledged it too : and this at least was ingenuous. Divines, however, with their usual undistinguishing Imputation, treat him as a Monster of Impiety ; because it seems he has drawn a "FORM of GODLINESS without the SPIRIT," a Spectre of Religion without VIRTUE, and without Substance. This is the Imputation. Perhaps it is true ; but it is certainly true, that he did not make, but discover it. It is not his, but their OWN : and this is His Impiety.

" ————— Ye holy Men

" In whom VICE sanctifies ! whose Doctrines teach

" ZEAL, without TRUTH, RELIGION without VIRTUE !"

The

And multiply th' ELECT, were VIRTUE, FAITH—
—Pause here, encompass'd Soul ! look round ; secure

In

The Poet,* we see, gives the Work to the proper Artificer.
This was just ; but though the Muse is sagacious as well as just,
it would require all her Sagacity to unfold the Secrets of this Art.

In Nova fert Animas, mutatas dicere formas
Corpora————

The various Systems of Superstition, or artificial Religion, which have been employed to dress and adorn Nature, have at the same Time covered its Deformity, and concealed its Beauty. This sacred Garment hath been turned and cut in a thousand fantastic Fashions, till now at last, Time and Use have worn it so thread-bare, that all but the Wearer see the Stuff and the Workmanship. 'Tis a Sort of regimental Coat made to fit all Shapes, and Sizes. Virtue, under this Disguise, becomes a Name only ; a mere Pretence ; the Effect of Pride, drawn out into a coarser, or finer Thread of Simulation. We all see this Truth ; all complain of the general Corruption ; yet still with one single Exception. MANDEVILLE attacks this Exception, and turns it into a Proof. We are pleased to find in his Pictures a Truth, and a Likeness, but angry to see our own Likeness : and he resembles the Painter who pleased every Body and Nobody. It is also objected to him that his Figures, though truly designed, are yet for the most Part drawn from low Life, and so unworthy of Description ; but we ought also to consider, that, in order to acquire a real Knowledge, NATURE must be viewed in all her Works. Not only the vegetable, the animal, the rational Creatures display the Wisdom of their Creator, but even Stocks and Stones. And in the moral Science, which is indeed the proper Knowledge and Business of Man ; not only the Learned,

* In the Tragedy of GUSTAVUS VASA.

In central Rest, observe this Whirl of Tides : 430
See the proud Surges swell ! they foam ! they roar !

The Noble, and the Wise, but the Ignorant, the Base, and the Foolish, are also proper Objects of Consideration ; since even “ of these STONES GOD is able to raise up CHILDREN unto ABRAHAM.”*

If such as above described, be the necessary Effect of Superstition, in propagating Vice and Corruption, all wise and good Men will sufficiently feel the Force of Duty and Obligation to unite their Endeavours, and exert their Power of opposing it. For “ if TIME (as Lord BACON says) alter Things to the worse, “ and Wisdom and Counsel shall not alter them to the better, what “ shall be the End ? We see the Reign or Tyranny of CUSTOM, “ what it is. Superstition is now so well advanced, that Men “ of the first Blood are as firm as Butchers by Occupations.” And are not Men to be found of the whole Blood (to appropriate his Lordship’s Expression) as staunch and sure in Truth and Virtue, as the Hell-hounds of Superstition in Vice and Falshood ? There is now an apparent Contrast, or Opposition of Character between those who, following Custom, are continually altering Things to the worse, and those, who keeping their Minds open to Conviction, are prepared to receive continual Amendment : In a Word, between the superstitious BIGOTS, and rational FREE-THINKERS. The Former indeed accuse the latter as Innovators :

“ As if Religion was intended

“ For nothing else but to be mended.

They accuse them too of Impiety and ATHEISM. This Accusation doth not deserve an Answer ; as it is notoriously false. And as to the Business of Innovation ; the Accusation perhaps were true, “ if TIME stood still ; which contrariwise moveth so “ round, that a froward Retention of Custom is as turbulent “ a Thing as Innovation. TIME itself is the greatest Innova-

* Λεγω γαρ ὑμιν ὅτι δύναται ὁ ΘΕΟΣ ἐν τῶν ΔΙΘΩΝ ΤΟΥΤΩΝ ἔγειραι ΤΕΚΝΑ τῷ ΑΒΡΑΑΜ. MATT. iii.

The Noise of many Waters! ENVY dire
Breaks up th' infernal Deep, and opens wide

Heav'ns

“ tor ;”† yet so, that by such Innovation, the Wise and Virtuous are still rendered greater Slaves to the Foolish and Vicious. Add now to Time Experience, to Experience Wisdom, to Wisdom Benevolence and good Intention, the Conjunction, will produce a Reformation, which, by approaching still nearer to TRUTH, cannot fail, in some degree, of producing a good Effect in redeeming Mankind from the Bondage of Vice and Superstition, and in restoring to REASON it's natural Freedom, and just Authority. Mankind is capable of Improvement in an endless Progression. This is plain from the present Order and Constitution of Things. They who neglect this Improvement in the present, and refer it wholly to a future State, blend together and confound certain with uncertain, known with unknown. They imitate the ignorant Rustic, who stood waiting on the Bank till the Stream should all be pass'd.

*Rusticus expectat dum defluat Amnis ; at ille
Labitur, & labetur in omne volubilis Ævum.*

By this Discipline they swell the Mind with an unnatural Pride, the Parent of false Virtue, which is indeed the worst Sort of Vice, and fill it with vain Hope and fond Expectation of future Perfection imaginary and unknown, while they neglect present Improvement, which is real and known. If some inspired Nurse should teach the next Generation to keep their Children swathed and bound till they were full grown, under Pretence that by the early Use of Legs and Arms men were assisted in the habitual Perpetration of Mischief, and that by stopping their Growth much Evil would be prevented, for which, in a future State they should be rewarded with Wings ; moreover if the Clergy finding this Fondness tended to promote the Honour and Profit of their Office, should defend and propagate the Practice with all their Arts of Learning and Eloquence, and expatiating largely

† BACON.

Heav'n's Flood-gates. Far o'er all the delug'd World
 The raging Sea prevails. Earth, Air, and Sky 435
 Are

on the glorious Perfection of High-flying, should descend particularly to explain and illustrate the wonderful Strength, Proportion and Activity of those Nerves and Muscles, which are adapted to perform all the various Motions of flying: doubtless we should soon see (at least in the Imagination of every Believer) Wings pullulating as fast as those of a Butterfly. It would be a pleasant Amusement for the Painter or Poet, to represent or describe the several Sorts of these atheriel Wingsters. A bulky Doctor, whose Weight and Power of Gravitation was great, would be seen to rise, or scarce perhaps to rise with Difficulty:

- " As when a Dab-chick waddles through the Copse,
- " On Feet and Wings, and flies, and wades, and hops.
- " So lab'ring on with Shoulders, Hands and Head
- " Wide as a Windmill, all his Figure spread,
- " He tries, but tries in vain, th' aerial Race,
- " And seems to emulate a Gander's Face.*"

The Flock of Curates, as being lighter, and less incumber'd with corporeal Weight, wou'd resemble Jack-Daws and Squealers, who are seen most about Churches and Steeples. Moreover, as every one during his State of Humanity or Probation, that is while his Wings were growing, and before his Conversion, or Transformation, might be suppos'd to write with a Pen made with a Quill of that particular Fowl, whose Form he shou'd hereafter assume; hence the Harmless Composers of Devotional Tracts, of Calls, Meditations, Preparations, and the like, would imitate that Species of Pidgeons, which from the Manner of their Flight are denominated Tumblers. One yonder, though glorying in the Spoils of the Peacock, and even dazzled with the Splendor of his Plumage, upon a nearer View may be discovered to be a Jay. Another, who, having missed his

* Parody from POPE.

Are blended. Universal Uproar reigns,
And FAITH's a fighting CHAOS ! Is this TRUTH ?

This

Way to the upper Regions, may be seen wandering below in the Fields of *Elysium*, and hopping about with an Air of Impudence mixed with Malevolence, is heard to chatter hard Names, as Fool, Rogue, Infidel, Atheist, and the like : This Fowl, I say, party coloured as he is, and variegated with black and white, commonly passes for a Bird of Learning, and a great Critic. He is a strong Proof of the old Proverb " that Two of a Trade " can never agree : For though he hates Mathematicians, yet he affects Demonstration. From all these specifical Marks, or Characters of this Bird, one may easily know it to be a Chick of that Breed, which the MUSES heretofore are said to have transformed into MAGPIES. Proctors, Apparitors, and the rest of the inferior Fry, who are retained as Spies and Informers, to certain ecclesiastical Inquisitors, may be changed into Crows, Ravens, and Vultures ; which though by Nature intended to feed on Carrion, yet too often devour Lambs. Rich Rectors, plural Incumbents, Prebends, Canons, Deans, &c. who feasting on the Remnants of Loaves and Fishes, and on the Reliques of primitive Poverty, take a Pride in following the Rules and Examples of Christian Humility ; all these assume the Forms and imitate the Flight of Kites, Gleads, and Buzzards. They mount aloft in the Sky, and expatiating in large Circles, look down with Contempt on all those Birds, which cannot soar so high as themselves. They are however, much more harmless than the last mentioned ; though it must be confessed, they sometimes stoop to seize a Chicken. But the far greatest Number, according to an old Observation, rise no higher than Bees, and never become Birds. These, it must be owned, are a very useful little Creature, and seem to be endowed with a most exquisite Sense, or Taste of Happiness ; since they spend their Time and find their Food among the most beautiful and fragrant Flowers, from which they extract, and prepare a certain liquid Sweet, that may be esteemed both the Nectar and Ambrosia of Immortality.

This the SURE WORD! The Voice reveal'd from Heav'n?
 Boldly refuse Assent——It CANNOT BE.

WHAT

tality. One Circumstance, however, must needs impair their Felicity. According to Naturalists they are frequently infested by a certain Insect, like a Spider, which breeds in their Hives, and makes them sick. This Insect, it seems, is known by the Name of CLERUS*. If these little Creatures could foresee this Inconvenience from the Beginning, certainly they would never desire Wings, but choose rather to remain for ever swathed, and bound up, in the imperfect State of Maggots. The ancient *Ægyptians* understood the swathing Practice; or rather perhaps were the first Inventors of it; since they were the first who seem to have cultivated with Care, the Seeds of Superstition. They begun the swathing Discipline very early, and continued it after Death; for even their dead Bodies were swathed with a most religious Diligence. This could hardly be done to prevent their walking, as that indeed hath been rarely seen; and they were too wise to provide so operose a Remedy to prevent a Fact which happened but seldom. It was therefore intended to promote the Growth of Wings; which Custom beginning in the earliest Age of Infancy, then towards the middle, and so to the latter End of Life, being interrupted, was now again renewed after Death, which completed the Operation. On the other Hand, they who are unassisted with this swathing Method, must be contented for ever to want Wings; and what is worse, are not only hated, but even condemned to the worst of Punishments, because they willfully reject, and seem to despise an Advantage which can only be acquired by this swathing Method. These therefore are Free-Thinkers. They pretend however that both the Reward and the Punishment are equally chimerical; that if they were real, yet the Method proposed can avail nothing, either to obtain the one, or to avoid the other. They affirm, that as it is

* PLIN. N. H. xv. 19.

WHAT then must be believ'd? Believe GOD TRUE.
 ALL NATURE lies before thee ; read his WILL. 441
 In

uncertain whether the swathing Method will hereafter produce Wings, so at present it must certainly contribute to make us lame, Man cannot be more wise, more happy, or more perfect than NATURE has intended : for NATURE is the WILL, or LAW of GOD. They choose therefore to walk on sure Ground, rather than to indulge a superstitious Fondness, and vain longing after unattainable Perfection : and instead of artificial, or miraculous Wings, are contented with the natural and free, as well as more secure Use of Legs and Feet. They acknowledge that this too is improveable. They see a Difference between the Gait of a Taylor and Dancing-Master ; and between the Air of a Peasant, and of a Gentleman. This Difference depends, in a great Degree, on Custom and Discipline. The same, or even greater Difference is observable in the Mind and Manners. And since a certain illustrious Prelate has asserted “ that without HOPE “ RELIGION is mere PHRENZY ; and since this also seems to be intended as a Characteristical Description of those, who are promiscuously denominated Free-thinkers, Infidels and Atheists, it may seem proper perhaps, in this Place, to explain what the Hope of a FREE-THINKER is ; leaving, in the mean Time, the Account of INFIDEL and ATHEIST to those who claim the Title. The Hope of a Free-Thinker differs in general from the Hope of a Superstitious or artificial Religionist. This is uncertain and chimerical ; whereas That, if not certain, is yet probable, being founded in NATURE, and in the Course of Things. The Religionist hopes that Superstition, the Free-thinker that Reason and Truth may prevail. He sees, as before hinted, a gradual Progression of Knowledge and Manners, and that this Progression is improveable. And as he feels it to be his Happiness, so he really thinks it to be his Duty to assist this Improvement. And as in every preceding Revelation, or Reformation of Religion, he sees this gradual Progression still approaching

In aught if thou should'st doubt, sincere, commit
Thyself to him, and patiently await,

Secure,

proaching nearer to Truth, and consequently the Means of Knowledge, and the Sense and Obligation of Virtue to be more and more extended ; from this View he not only forms a pleasing, but fixes a probable Expectation, that one time or other, according to the stated Course and Order of Things, Truth and Virtue will universally prevail, and that all Mankind will become free Subjects of that ROYAL LAW,* which is truly the LAW of NATURE, and the WILL of GOD. Thus he hopes, and not only hopes, but prays continually, according to the Direction of a Great FREE-THINKER : " THY KINGDOM COME." This is the Point which terminates his Hope. To this capital Point the whole Order of Things seems to lead in a certain Progression, and by a clear and manifest Connexion. Here then he rests. Not as the superstitious Bigot in a Circle of Tales, unconnected among themselves, and contrary to Nature ; nor as the artificial Bigot, who forms and reforms those Tales, till they obtain, as he thinks, a Connexion among themselves, and a Similarity, or Conformity with Nature ; which vain Labour plainly shews the Necessity of referring Truth to a more certain Standard than mere Imagination. This Standard is the LAW of NATURE, or WILL of GOD ; which exacts a perfect Allegiance to the MAKER. This LAW includes Obligation, Sanction and Reward : all which are known, and felt, in Proportion as the Law itself is known, and felt, and recognised. Every Part of it admits a clear and precise Definition, and is capable of being expressed in intelligible Propositions, connected and consistent, with Regard to the Motive, the Means, and the End ; which cannot be truly affirmed of any Species of Superstition, or artificial Religion.

* ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΣ ΝΟΜΟΣ. ΙΑΜΕΣ. ΙΙ. 8.

Secure, his secret Will. Believe him **KIND** :
To fear were to offend him. Fill thy Heart

445
With

As to **Tuturity**, the Freethinker leaves it among the **SECRET** " **THINGS** which belong unto **GOD** ;" having, in this Case, no sufficient Foundation on which may be built any thing more certain than Conjecture, which may perhaps, afford Means of wishing, but none of proving. These Proofs, whenever they shall be exhibited, must rise on a Foundation more strong, more stable, and more manifest than those which are derived from the mere Visions of the superstitious Bigot, or the mere Sophisms of the artificial Religionist. Religion therefore is nothing else but a Sense, or Conscience of Obligation arising from the **LAW**, or **WILL** of **GOD**, expressed, revealed, and commanded in the Constitution of **NATURE**. By how much more freely and diligently we exercise and cultivate our **REASON**, by so much more clearly this **LAW** is perceived and understood. From this Recognition, formed and confirmed by the united Powers of Custom, Experience, and Reason, arises that perfect Sense or Conscience of Duty and Obligation, which constitutes real **VIRTUE**, or **MANHOOD**. Thus **MAN** is, or certainly is constituted and empowered to be, capable of performing and fulfilling every Part of Duty to himself, to Mankind, and to his **MAKER** ; being free from all those monstrous Growths of Vice and Corruption, and from all that Mystery of **INIQUITY**, which having been introduced, fomented and established by various artificial Systems of Superstition, hath almost totally corrupted human Nature ; while under Pretence of Religion, all the unnatural Passions have been superinduced, and Man, instead of rational and pious, hath been rendered absurd and irrational in his Opinions, and in Practice selfish, unjust, and impious. Hence it hath happened, that **MEN INDEED** are **BRED NO WHERE** ;* and that it is hard to

* **BOLINGBROKE** on Retirement, &c. p. 195.

With his felt LAWS, and act the Good he loves.
Love GOD with all thy Soul, and love Mankind.

Rev'rence

find, any where, " a MAN, who lives naturally, and as a
" MAN."†

And so much concerning the Causes of Corruption. We should next, according to the proposed Method, consider the Cure. But this in general may be gathered from precedent Observations. The Application belongs to public Authority, and therefore I presume not to meddle with it. But as to that particular Species of Vice, of which the Essence, the Cause and Progress have been explained, I may be allowed to observe farther, that after the first Efforts of Christianity failed in correcting it, the Cure, since that Time doth not even seem to have been intended ; whether it be that the Attempt was thought to be vain and impracticable (as indeed it will always be found to be so, when the Cure of Vice is attempted by Means of Superstition, which still encreases and foment it) ; or that the Managers of ecclesiastical Polity thought it more advantageous to their Scheme, and more favourable to their Authority, to indulge Vice, and subdue the Pride of Virtue, by controlling, in some Cases, natural Right, and just Freedom : yet so it is, that either Fornication is never punished, or that which is vulgarly called so, and punished as such, is not really Fornication. What it is we have seen before, where we have given a precise Definition of it. But when it sometimes happens, that following the Impulse of a natural Affection, some unexperienced young Man proceeds to indulge, and gratify it, with Sincerity and Simplicity, though without the Impudence of public Notice, or ecclesiastical Licence, this is not Fornication ; there is no Prostitution. It is the Effect of pure Affection ; which is the true Foundation of that Love and Faith which constitutes the sacred Union of the Sexes. Public Notice can only violate the Modesty and Delicacy of this Affection, where it is sincere ; and where it is brutal, selfish, or insincere, nei-

† CHARACTERISTICS.

ther

Rev'rence his Pow'r, his Wisdom, Goodness, shewn
In all his Works: THERE read his WILL reveal'd.

Nor

ther that, nor Licence can give Sanctity to an impure Passion, or Security to one void of Faith. If Nature here may not be trusted, Art much less; if the former denies her Sanction, the latter can give none. It can give indeed, and this is all that it can give, safe indulgence to the vicious and profligate, and Leave to play the Strumpet with more Security. As therefore it seems unnecessary to ask leave to do that, which, when proceeding from a pure Motive, is not only lawful, but a Duty, and when derived from an impure Motive, Nothing can sanctify; so, for the same Reason, it is ridiculous. And certainly this whole Business of artificial Matrimony, which now, through long Time and Custom, is established, and makes so great a Part of civil and ecclesiastical Polity, had originally a very ridiculous, or perhaps a very impure or selfish Motive. The Motive was selfish, when the Increase of Wealth, and the Distinction of Names and Families was solely intended; the impure Motives may be better imagined,* perhaps than described: and both, if represented truly, would be seen in a Light sufficiently ridiculous. Yet Time and Custom have turned the Perspective, and by disguising the Motives, the artificial UNION is become honourable, and the natural is rendered disgraceful. This with the comic Poet, is, "the WAY of the WORLD:" with the Philosopher, "private Vices public Benefits:." and with the Divine, the MYSTERY of INIQUITY.—The only Way to cure this Evil, which is still encreasing, is first to turn the Perspective; to represent Things as they appeared at the Beginning, and to treat them accordingly. Let not MAN presume to forbid, much less to condemn THAT, which GOD at first commanded. Political Art wou'd be usefully, and therefore properly employ'd,

* See Mr. FONTENELLE, Dialogue VIII. CALLIRHEA. PAULINA.

Nor arrogantly vain presume to scan
His secret Purpose, or direct his Arm

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To

in finding Means to protect, to support and encourage this natural Liberty. The particular Case marks and distinguishes itself. Every Woman who bears a Child, can find a FATHER, who is a MAN ; for there are NOW NO GODFATHERS ; and this FATHER is her HUSBAND. Perhaps the Choice was mutual, the Affection mutual ; and if it was pure also, single and individual, it must needs produce that FAITH which completes the natural Union of the Sexes, and by fulfilling the divine Command, and Order of NATURE, must therefore best answer the End of civil Society. In the Rise and Progress of that Passion which connects the Sexes, and from thence produces the strongest civil Connexions, there is something too nice and tender for common Touch, and artificial handling. The very Admission of Witnesses is a Sort of Prostitution, or Fornication. It must unfold itself gradually, as one of those Secrets of divine ART which admits not human Interposition. It seems to include a Sort of Sacramental Mystery ; which needs not, and ev'n rejects the Force of public Restraint, and of public Notice. But when that natural Union is violated by artificial Force, either both Parties are compelled into legal ADULTERY, if new Connexions are formed : or if not, which is indeed more usual, and seen in daily Experience, they are let loose to rove at random, through all the senseless Grossness of brutal Debauchery and Fornication. And this is the genuine and real Effect of that Method, which deriving its Force from unnatural Affection, absurd Argument, and superstitious Motives, hath been vainly applied to cure an Evil, which by that Application hath continually increased. And this is so plain, that it may seem probable the Cure was either not understood, or never intended.

It is evident therefore, that if the Evil be deemed real, some other Method of Cure shou'd be intended. This can be no other

To launch the vengeful Light'ning on thy Foes.
 Know him, but in his GOODNESS, pay Respect

To

other than gradually to exhibit a right View of Nature, of Truth, and Virtue, and to shew their Connexion with human Happiness, both private and public. Next, as this particular Vice, according to its Origin, and progress, as before described, seems more than any other, to be founded in the Constitution of Mankind, and in the Inequality of the Sexes, it may seem too to require and deserve some Indulgence and Privilege, and so become a proper Subject of Civil, or Political Licence. Be it therefore enacted, that no one presume to keep without Licence either private or public House of Fornication, in which the Female Modesty is prostituted, and that no one without Licence visit or frequent such House of Fornication. Also that both the Keepers and Frequenters of such Houses be for ever excluded from all Public Offices, Civil or Military; Provided nevertheless the said Keepers and Frequenters of such Houses be allowed or admitted in all Ecclesiastical Offices, any thing in this Act contained to the Contrary notwithstanding. And because every CHILD, which may happen to be born in such Houses, may be consider'd as a Birth extraordinary or MIRACULOUS, such Child ought to be deem'd a *Deqdad*, if a Male, and consecrated from his Birth: and if a Female; (since Superstition is still likely to proceed on its old Principles) hence also we shou'd obtain a sacred Order of *Palladian* Virgins, who, according to the ancient, and original Design of their Institution, * might become a Nursery or Seminary for the CHURCH. And so much for the Cure of Fornication; which by this Method wou'd certainly be prevented, and where it could not be cured, the Evil wou'd be turned into Good.

(406, &c.) He concludes therefore, that in every CHURCH as the Vices of the Faithful fix no Stain on FAITH, so neither doth VIRTUE make it Orthodox; but FAITH only sanctifies

* See STRABO Geograph.

To SCHEMES erroneous, when they mean his Praise.

Respect his PRIESTS; for ev'ry PRIEST is HIS, 455
Who

either Virtue or Vice according to the MERE WILL of the Priest.——If VIRTUE verified FAITH, then the Limits of the CHURCH and the World wou'd be the same; and VIRTUE in all Times and Places wou'd be the sole true Mark or Symbol of right FAITH.

413-14.) A double Allusion: One to the magical Rod formerly us'd in Mining; the other to the sacred Branch, which the Sybil in VIRGIL gives ENEAS, when she conducts him to Elysium.

(420.) The Simplicity of the INDIANS of *Hispaniola* is well drawn by PETER MARTYR from the Testimony of COLUMBUS: One of whom first discover'd, the other first described that New World. "They are content with so little, " that in so large a Country they have rather Superfluity than " Scarceness. Among them the Land is common as Air, Light, " or Water; so that they seem indeed to live in the Golden " World, without Toil, in open Gardens not intrrenched with " Dykes, nor divided with Hedges, nor defended with Walls. " Healthful by Temperance and Exercise, and honest by Nature, " they deal truly one with another, without Laws, without " Books, and without Judges. They esteem him a Monster, " who takes Pleasure in doing Hurt to another." Here indeed was a noble Field for Improvement; but falling under the Management of Bigots, this Scene of natural Beauty was presently changed into a Scene of Deformity and Horror: While under Pretence of Converting these innocent People to the Practice and Discipline of a more pure and divine Religion, all the grossest Corruptions of Fraud and Vice were introduced; and all the Cruelties of Avarice, Rapine and Superstition were superadded. The naked Inhabitants were hunted with Dogs; Wives and Daughters ravish'd before the Eyes of Husbands and Fathers; and Children murder'd, and torn to Pieces in the Sight of helpless Parents. All this was done by Christians to Savages and Babarians; by holy Priests, who were Chris-
tians



Who finds him in his CONSCIENCE, by what Name
So e'er distinguish'd, howsoe'er misdrawn

They

tians in Name only, to those, who tho' call'd Savage and Barbarous, were Christians indeed : For they were mild, just and benevolent ! The same Fraud and Corruption, tho' not with equal Cruelty, have been introduced among the other *Indian* Nations by other *European* Strangers, who afterwards frequent-ed those Western Regions ; the honest Quakers only excepted, who settled in *Pennsylvania* ; the Effects of which are at this time particularly seen and felt by our Colonies in those Parts. The Missionaries of Superstition, it seems, have taught the *Indians* to esteem *Britons* as a Nation of Infidels and Atheists. Towards these, Cruelty is meritorious ; and that Inhumanity, which ev'n in a State of War is monstrous, is now become ev'n among them, the Effect of Religion. The Practice indeed is horrible ! and by destroying every Instinct of Morality and natural Affection, must at length introduce the worst Tyranny of Superstition in those fruitful Countries. This, no doubt, is chiefly intended by those Missionaries ; it is their Trade. They are train'd and disciplin'd in Fraud and Cruelty. But in *Britons*, who are born and bred in a Land of Freedom ; who are Friends and Guardians of Christian Liberty ; as the Consequence can never be approv'd or intended, so the Practice is as contrary to their Genius, as to the Dignity and Honour of human Nature. It is really astonishing that such a Scene of Cruelty shou'd arise from a Religion founded on the Principle of UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE ! The Astonishment however will cease, when we consider, which is true in fact, that as in all Civil Institutions, founded in Common Sense, and common Right, the Progress is from Good to Better ; so in all religious Systems, founded in Superstition, the Progress is from Good to Bad. The former are improv'd and perfected by Time and Experience ; the latter corrupted. The former begin, as Necessity

allows

They deviously believe. What tho' they preach
Perdition to the FAITHFUL ? TRUTH dares own

Respect

allows, with an imperfect Association of rude and ignorant Men ; the latter always assumes, or pretends the most undisputed Maxims of NATURAL LAW, which easily gaining Authority, it slips gradually and unsuspected into those blind Engagements, which produce and establish Tyranny. This Progression of human Affairs, which never rest in a Point, is manifested by Experience. Is any thing, at this Day, more odious to a sincere Protestant, or ev'n to some *Romanists*, than *Jesuitism*, or than the Founder of that Sect, *IGNATIUS LOYOLA* ? And yet perhaps his Character is mistaken and misrepresented by both. A curious Passage in the Life of *PADRE PAOLO the Venetian*, will render this Opinion probable. " *PADRE BOBADIGLIA* " was one of the TEN Companions of *IGNATIUS*, and living " when *PAOLO* flourish'd. One time he freely told *PAOLO* " that it was never the Design of his Master, that his Company " should follow those Maxims, which already had gained Authority among them. That if he could return to life again, " he wou'd not know his Disciples, since in so short a time, " they had deviated so much from their original Institution, that " they acted quite contrary to the Spirit and Design of it." See here then an Instance of Corruption, which grew into an Institution so early, as immediately upon the Death of the Founder gave occasion to one of his Disciples to complain, and, as it seems, ev'n to separate himself from his Company. The Case of *BOBADIGLIA* seems very much to resemble that of *MARK the EVANGELIST*, who, by refusing the Bishopric of *Alexandria*, shew'd, that ev'n Then some Corruption had been introduc'd either into the History or Doctrine of his Master. And indeed, if we may be allow'd to judge, and to speak freely, there appears to be so great a Difference, and ev'n Contrariety, between the prime Principles, and the several Parts of that Institution, that whereas the Great OUT-LINES are clearly drawn, and

Respect to ERROR, when its END is GRACE,
And aims at REFORMATION. Mindful yet

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Men

and strongly mark'd, according to TRUTH and the LAW of NATURE, they are afterwards fill'd up by those, who writ the History, and manag'd the Design, in a Manner which counteracts, and destroys the original Intention. In the first appear the greatest simplicity and plainness of pure THEISM; while the other is crouded and intricated with artificial Obscurity, Ambiguity, and Contradiction, which grew apace into that System of obstinate Superstition, which for many Ages prevailed; till in the XVI Century by the Resurrection of Letters it was a little check'd and restrained. So that if *Jesus* shou'd return into the World, he wou'd hardly know his own History and Doctrine, not only as it is now understood, but neither thro' all the intermediate Changes and Depravations, which have been introduced from his Death to the present Time.

These Corruptions grew at last into IMPLICIT FAITH, and INFALLIBILITY. And Padre PAOLO being at NAPLES when some Consultations were held among the CLERGY concerning the Means of supporting them; BELLARMIN, afterwards CARDINAL, whisper'd in his Ear, "These are the Things that have made GERMANY revolt, and will produce the same Revolutions in FRANCE, and in other Kingdoms." The HIERARCHY however, instead of profiting by such Documents, continue to stumble on thro' all the Mists and Darkness of Prophecy, Miracles, Mystery, and implicit Faith; and amidst the clear Light of Nature and Reason, compel us either to shut our Eyes, or to acknowledge that they alone can see; while like Knights-Errant they courteously offer themselves, as Guides to conduct us thro' all these intricate Labyrinths, which they themselves have contrived, and as Guardians against those fiery Dragons, and monstrous Forms, which without their Aid, and ev'n by their Command, stand ready to devour us. And for this great Deliverance they require no other Reward but that

with

Men are but Men, when MOST THOU TRUSTS, BEWARE.
Stretch not Esteem to Homage. Be nor SLAVE

Nor

with all Humility we prostrate ourselves before the Lady of their Affection, who with IGNORANCE at her Right Hand, and at her Left CREDULITY sits enthroned in a Cloud of Darkness, whose variable Being still changing thro' numberless fantastic Forms, and strange Apparitions, is known by the Name of *Superstition*.

(440.) The Poet having shew'd the Incertainty and Confusion of Implicit FAITH, and artificial Creeds, and the universal Disorder of Superstition and Bigotry; proceeds to shew on what Foundation Belief and Knowledge may rest, one in probability, the other in certainty! This Foundation is NATURE. NATURE is the WORK of GOD; and in his WORKS his WILL or LAW is revealed. From these therefore all real Knowledge is derived. And in Proportion as Knowledge is REAL, the SENSE of DUTY or Obligation becomes REAL also. For tho' the great CREATOR hath so constituted human Nature, that all Duty and Obligation begins from SENSE, and ultimately ends in it; yet they have not their full Force and Moment, till those SENSES, from which they arise, become the Objects of Knowledge, and are recognis'd by Reflexion. Before such Reflexion, Duty is attended with a sort of Obscurity something like that which attends Implicit Faith. In this only they differ, which is indeed a great Difference, that Here the Impression is made by the Artifice of MAN, There by the Wisdom of GOD. Hence it is that Brute Animals, whose Senses never become to them the Objects of Reason, or Reflexion, do yet act more uniformly, and consistently with Nature, than MAN, who tho' capable of such Reflexion, is yet trained by Custom and wrong Disciplin to counteract it. And hence too appears the Necessity of right Disciplin or Education, that no Tendencies or Inclinations may be superadded to the Mind, which in their Progress may counteract Nature, but only Culture and Improvement added to those, which

NOR SCORNER. Gladly hear strong Reason's Voice
 Tongu'd by the Man, who loves it ; and since THAT 465
 Cries

in their Progress advance it to Perfection. Thus the MORAL SENSE is the first natural Tendency to VIRTUE, which by a slow Progression becomes CONSCIENCE ; and when by Use and Discipline they Both become the Objects of Reflexion, they then constitute a full and perfect Obligation. This Obligation is felt and acknowledg'd in Proportion to the Strength and Clearness of the Sense from which it is originally derived, and to the Care and Diligence employ'd in recognising it. And hence by Repetition and Custom, Conscience itself becomes a Natural INSTINCT, and so by a certain and necessary Power directs, controls, and regulates all the Sentiments, the Affections, and the Actions of MAN. Lastly, by these Steps the Mind advancing in a natural Progression, sees, and recognises the Great AUTHOR of NATURE ; that FAITH, LOYALTY, or ALLIANCE to GOD is the first LAW, or Obligation, and the Second is CHARITY, or LOVE of MANKIND. All this our Poet proves by regular Deduction in the following Part of his Work ; and concludes with our NOBLE BRITISH PHILOSOPHER, who in his ENQUIRY hath demonstrated with the greatest Force of Reason, and Beauty of Expression, that PRIME TRUTH, " That ALL IS RIGHT ;" and that the united Powers of PIETY and VIRTUE contain the whole Sum of human Duty and Happiness.

(462.) A needful Caution, like that of EPICHRMUS in CICERO :

Ναφς, ηι μεμνός ΑΠΙΣΤΕΙΝ ἀρθρα ταυτα των φρένων.

(464.) " Nor SCORNER"—GLAUCO a conceited BIGOT, very ignorant, and very proud with Implicit Faith, and imputed Righteousness, despises, and condemns REASON. If you mention the wonderful Truths discovered by NEWTON, he
 Replies

Cries LIBERTY, unaw'd by servile Dread,
Free thy chain'd Soul from Fears unworthy GOD,

And

Replies with Contempt, " Without all this Toil and Pride,
" and Vanity of Knowledge, I shall know more in Heaven."
When **DIOGENES**, ('tis said) visited **PLATO**, he was receiv'd
with great Respect, which however did not hinder him from
treading with his dirty Feet on the Velvet Cushions, and
rich Carpets; and assuming an Air of Severity, " Thus,"
says he, " I trample on the Pride of **PLATO**." The Answer
of that polite Philosopher wou'd do well enough for our
Orthodox Scorners: " But with more Pride thou dost it, good
" **DIOGENES**."—From the same Foundation the Poet in his
Essay seems to have drawn his serious Banter:

" Superior Beings, when of late they saw
" A MORTAL MAN UNFOLD ALL NATURE'S LAW;
" Admir'd such WISDOM in a HUMAN SHAPE,
" And SHEW'D a NEWTON as Men SHEW an APE!"

But in Truth the Praise of unfolding the Law of NATURE,
as it relates to the Constitution, the Practice, and the Happiness
of MAN, seems more properly to belong to the Noble Philo-
sopher, before quoted, than to any other, ancient or modern;
whose Adversaries, by imitating his Style, and pilfering his
Principles, have only dar'd to attack him as in **HOMER** **HECTOR**
combats **ACHILLES** in his own Armour. These in Reality are
the only APES, that deserve to be shew'd; while by a certain
scenical or mimetic Representation, they vainly exhibit **DEITY**,
as it were in a Tragedy, and only to untie some Knot, which
they themselves have made, and which after all their absurd
Diligence remains as fast as before.

(464-5.) The Poet in this Place seems to characterise the
late excellent Dr. FOSTER, whose Eloquence and Reason were
as remarkable as his Candour, Benevolence and Integrity.

And love him for Himself. This Duty felt,
While OBLIGATION is but WILL's Consent
With CONSCIENCE harmonizing, ERR thou may'st, 470
Unwillingly thou can'st not SIN. Were ONE

Prime

(470-1.) It was noted before that Conscience is founded on MORAL SENSE; and on Conscience, Obligation. And when the WILL, which is nothing more than a Tendency to Happiness, agrees, and harmonises with Conscience, then we feel, and fulfill that First and perfect Duty of FAITH, Allegiance, or LOYALTY to GOD, mentioned before. This is perfect FREEDOM, agreeable to those sage Verses of CLEANTHES :*

“ Conduct me THOU of Beings Cause divine,
“ Where'er I'm destin'd in thy great Design ;
“ Active I follow on ; for shou'd my WILL
“ Resist, I'm Impious, but must follow still.”

There seems to be no other Freedom of WILL than This ; which is the Consent, or Agreement of it with Conscience. That is, when the WILL, or Tendency to Happiness corresponds with NATURE, or the WILL and LAW of GOD. The Resistance made against this Tendency is indeed an inert, impotent, or passive Power, † arising from Implicit FAITH, or receiving wrong Direction from Passion, or false Opinion, deriv'd either from partial and imperfect Views of NATURE, or from the artificial Impediments of Superstition, and Bigotry, which produce the same Effect, only in a greater Degree, and more malignant. To suppose the WILL, when VICE and VIRTUE are clearly seen, felt and recognised, free to chuse either, is agreeable to the Doctrine of those, who suppose

* See an Essay on Happiness, &c. by — HARRIS.

† IGNAVA RATIO,

Prime Form, ONE CREED, th' Almighty Maker's Will,
Ne'er had that WILL been frustrate. Dare not doubt

But

VIRTUE and VICE to be founded only in CUSTOM, FASHION,
or arbitrary Command. So LUCRETIVS:

—————FATIS avolsa VOLUNTAS.

Custom and Education may strengthen, alter or corrupt the moral SENSE, but can no more create it, than the Sense of seeing. The Mind, by a continual Effort, may perhaps attain something like the Freedom of WILLING contrary to NATURE, but this Power, or rather Impotence, which may be properly called the Deception of VICE,* is Nothing but our own Mistake, arising from imperfect Views of NATURE; by which we are imperceptibly led by a general Law, while we fancy ourselves to be guided by mere WILL; whereas our REAL FREEDOM is only a perceived Concord, or Harmony of our own WILL with the LAW of NATURE, WILL OF GOD, or divine NECESSITY. For the Desires all tend to natural Objects; or if otherwise, the unnatural Tendency must proceed either from Disease, or Violence. Now if the WILL be indeed Desire of Happiness, it can be only a Combination of single Desires, by custom complicated and connected, and regulated by Reason; from whence it should seem to follow, that as single Desires all tend to natural Objects, so the WILL also should tend to natural Objects, and not to Impossibilities. But, if seeing Vice to be, what it really is, the Disease of the Mind, we should yet chuse it as a Mean of Happiness, the WILL would then tend to Impossibility; which is absurd. And this shews the Vanity of Superstition, and of every artificial Motive of the WILL, which must be either foolishly, or wickedly applied, when it doth not correspond with TRUTH and NATURE.

* This is called in S. S. the DECEIVABLENESS of SIN."

But HE, whose WILL was POW'r, whose POW'r compells,
Had molded ALL to that ONE FORM he lov'd. 475

LOVES he not UNITY ? he doth. But know
The Unity GOD loves, is lodg'd in MIND.

'Tis

(475, &c.) There is UNITY of TRUTH, and UNITY of WILL. With Regard to the former, it may be observed, there are no Degrees of Perception. When the SAME TRUTH is perceived by many, it is alike perceived. There are many TRUTHS, to which all Mankind have EVER assented ; and a Collection of these would form a CREED, which might properly be called CATHOLIC FAITH. But this UNITY is not the Purpose of artificial CREEDS. Such CREEDS are usually a Collection of IRREGULARS, or of Things, in which Mankind disagrees most, and which agree least with NATURE. Hence they become Marks of Distinction, and Motives of Discord.——UNITY of WILL centers in those two great Principles, LOVE of GOD, and LOVE of MAN ; Each of these may be considered either as Affection, or Duty. Affection is natural, and necessary : and when it becomes the Object of Reflection, the Duty, or Obligation arising from it, is made perfect by Recognition. The more therefore we study, and understand the Works of GOD, Affection and consequential Obligation will arise more pure, strong and perfect. This, as was said before, is perfect FREEDOM. But perfect Freedom cannot be without FREE-THINKING, or a just Knowledge of NATURE, and of the WILL, or LAW of GOD, free from artificial Restraint, and mere arbitrary Imposition. And without such Freedom, no LAW, or Duty being felt, or understood, nothing can be produced, but implicit FAITH, or Submission to mere arbitrary Command, with consequential Vice and Corruption. For whatever may be pretended, without such Knowledge of NATURE, Affection and consequent Obligation can be derived only from Dreams, and Chimeras of Imagination, which produces Superstition and Bigotry, and renders every Cor-
ruption

'Tis the Heart's conscious Glow, that beats to thank,
 Not scrutinize his Bounty ! 'tis the Chain
 That links INTENTION in one Warmth of WILL, 480
 Not binds in one forc'd Act of outward FORM !

Thus

ruption of the Mind more dangerous and malignant. Hence in private Life, every Sort of Vice grows and prevails more and more : In Religion, Discord, Hatred, and Persecution ; and in States, either Tyranny and Oppression with servile Subjection ; or, where some Mixture of Freedom remains, there we find the most just and mild Government perplexed and disturbed by continual Seditions, Treasons, and Rebellions. He that is not true and faithful to GOD, can never be true and faithful to MAN ; and the more there is of Justice and Truth in human Government, that is, the more it approaches to the REASON and TRUTH of divine Government, so much the more these Corruptions prevail, in Proportion as Superstition was admitted in the original Plan of such Government, or was afterwards introduced and adopted by a strange Sort of monstrous Mixture, called " An Alliance between CHURCH and State." Now UNITY of FAITH on such a fantastical Foundation, is a mere CHIMERA. All that can be done when Men affect to build such aërial Fabrics, is to give the same NAME to a THING which is continually changing, and to express and support, by the same Ceremonies, an implicit Belief of Doctrines, which either cannot be understood, because mysterious, or cannot be believed, because inconsistent. And even this were tolerable, perhaps, if compulsion were not added ; and if the Managers of such artificial Systems of FAITH and supernatural Meteorology, did not explain it so, as either to make it unintelligible, or to make us see, it can only serve their own Purposes ; which indeed are plainly enough discovered in the Contrivance, and more plainly in the Execution, by gratifying PRIDE and Selfishness, and by promoting VICE, ERROR and DISCORD.

Thus thinking thou wilt feel the GODHEAD RIGHT;
 Unclosing in a House of jointed Stone
 HIM, in whose Temple twenty thousand SUNS
 Are lighted Lamps, and all their spangly Worlds 485
 Form Footsteps to his Altar. This believe,
 And dread no Vengeance on mistaking Man,
 Unadequate to Man's brief Pow'r in Sin,
 Offending Point of implicated Will,
 'Gainst him beneath whose Smile the Stars catch Fire! 490
 Fill'd with Ideas thus becoming Man,
 Pity the Zeal-touch'd BIGOT, who contracts
 To Superstition's Gloom Religion's Joy,
 Debasing Adoration into Dread:
 Who, straining his dull Fancy's misty Dream, 495
 Peeps thro' his narrow Soul's dim Loophole Wink,
 And insolently, by his own Scale, takes
 The Altitude of Heaven! but if compell'd
 To lend thy patient Ear, and press'd too hard,

By

(489.) The WILL, being only the Result, or complicated Power of various Desires, hence arise various and sometimes opposite Attractions; and while these often act instantaneously, the Mind perceives not their true Moment. Hence the Will becomes implicated and confused. Mistakes arise; but these Mistakes when involuntary, are only Points of Deviation, while in general, it holds a right Course to Happiness, and harmonises with CONSCIENCE, and the Order of NATURE.

(499.) Nothing shews the Spirit of BIGOTRY more truly than this Observation, " that while it consists only in mere Obstinacy,

" NOT

By Self-sufficiency of teasing FAITH, 500
 That, knowing Nothing, will be sure of ALL;
 Hear with dumb Smile; and ask'd why Reason's Range
 Acquits Dissention? teach thy judging Eye
 To read GOD's Answer, in his Works, for MAN.

"NOT TO KNOW, and accordingly with Scorn rejects the
 "Means of Conviction, and Improvement, yet pretends to be
 "SURE of every Thing, and to direct and execute even the
 "SECRET Purposes of the ALMIGHTY." REASON, it must be
 confessed, has a hard Task, when in contending with so blind
 an Adversary, and being obliged to oppose Brute Force, it is re-
 presented as contending with GOD. In answer therefore to the
 Zealot, who proves the Necessity of ONE Belief, or of UNITY of
 FAITH, from the WILL of GOD, our Poet joins Issue, by ap-
 pealing to his WORKS; in which is plainly manifested a SAME-
 NESS, or UNITY, amidst an infinite VARIETY.* But this Unity
 is not a Sameness of Names, or of FORMS and MODES of Belief,
 and Worship, but of Design expressed and executed by infinite
 Variety of Means; which in MAN, is UNITY of WILL and
 REASON, contending to one Point of Happiness, ALLEGIANCE
 to GOD, and BENEVOLENCE to MAN.—This is the Doctrine
 of our religious and philosophical BARD; and this the Answer
 which he supposes GOD makes by his Works in behalf of MAN;
 whom the Zealot blindly affecting to exalt him to Divinity by
 implicit FAITH, in reality degrades to the lowest Rank of Bru-
 tality.

(504.) "Read GOD's Answer, in his Works, for Man."

The Poet doth not mean that GOD made the World solely
 for the Sake of MAN. This is the vain and arrogant Doctrine
 of the Zealot, whom he hath here attempted to refute. The
 Meaning is, that GOD himself, in his Works, answers this
 Question for Man, whose Conscience, though necessarily subject
 to LAW NATURAL, or DIVINE, yet is not intended to be
 subject to mere WILL, or arbitrary Command.

* See HUTCHESON, &c.

Where do THEY tell thee SAMENESS was his Choice? 505

How various are his Creatures? various all

His animal, his vegetable Tribes;

Earth's, Air's, wide Ocean's Products, all unlike;

In Qualities, Forms, Colours, diff'rent all.

Tread but th' enamel'd Mead, or o'er yon Fields 510

(506.) And this Truth he proves by a Deduction of Particulars. The Proof derives its Force from Knowledge of NATURE. Knowledge of NATURE is Knowledge of GOD; for NATURE is his WORK, his WILL, his LAW; and therefore (as Lord BACON says) "there was NEVER MIRACLE wrought to convert an ATHEIST, but to convert the IDOLATERS and Superstitious." For MIRACLES being Part of Superstition, it has always been found more easy to drive out one Species of it by another, and to change, than to cure it. MIRACLES violate the Order and Union of NATURE; and are therefore apply'd by the Religionist as artificial Means to form an Unity of Belief not founded in NATURE, and as they do not correspond with NATURE, they overthrow, or corrupt, the genuin Proof, and Revelation of DEITY, and so always introduce either ATHEISM, or POLYTHEISM. "The slow Progress of NATURE" (says Bishop BERKLEY,) is the Way, in which GOD reveals his Wisdom and Goodness. Without that Uniformity, "which we call NATURE, all human Design, Sagacity and REASON wou'd be Nothing." MIRACLES therefore, instead of proving that Unity of FAITH, which the Religionist intends, are themselves *unprovable*. We have no Feeling, or Consciousness of their Reality; no Proof from Experience: Nothing sways in this Case but Report, or Tradition; which working by Credulity, and fomented by Authority, the Fermentation rises gradually, till Credulity becomes Implicit FAITH, and Authority swells into INFALLIBILITY.

'Twixt the wide waving Corn indent thy Way;
 Or, partial to the Garden's painted Proofs,
 Try there thy pleas'd Attention; snuff this Air,
 Pregnant of Fragrance, and contending Sweets,
 How numberless the Scents? yet each distinct 515
 Of ev'ry Tree's known Bloom. Mark well those Flow'rs,
 Lowliest, yet loveliest! Excellence depress'd!
 Worth trampled by Despisers! short-liv'd Sweets!
 How oppositely soft the streak-touch'd Shades
 That tinge their fragrant Lustres? Some receive 520
 A milder Light, and blend the gilded Rays
 In delicate Confusion; some erect
 Their tufted Stems, or with alternate Bells,
 Fall graceful: blooming all in vernal Youth
 Smile the gay Daughters of the chearful Spring, 525
 Others with prouder Air affect to shine,
 Boldly they court the Sun's more potent Beam,
 And gathering all the mingled Blaze of Day,
 Put out Imagination.—Turn thine Eye
 From Pity due to Beauty, ris'd soon, 530
 By the rude Lust of Spoilers! Now look out
 On yon fair opening Plain. There Herb meets Herb,
 All green, yet none resembling! Shades less deep,
 Touch Lights more soft'ning, feastful to the Eye,
 That dwells on their Distinctions! still new glows 535
 Diversify the Verdure's fluid Surge,
 And dance delightful on the wavy Bend!

Next up the steepy Shelve ascending flow
 Surmount the Down's high Top, whose turfy Mound
 Ends at the jutting Cliff that shades the Shore. 540

Hence to the wing-divided Air extend
 Survey's charm'd Outlet. O'er this upper Sea,
 Where Meditation founders, various Flights
 Cross-cut the winnow'd Æther ; black, white, grey,
 Red, blue, brown, golden, verdant, motley-stain'd; 545
 Distinct in Shape, in Colours, and in Voice,
 None looks, none calls like other ; no sweet Bird
 That beats the pathless Air, but pours new Notes
 Diff'rent from ev'ry plumy Rival's Song.

Now from the Steep of this high Rock look down, 850
 Where the broad Sea, scarce heard, rolls murm'ring in.
 Ponder the Deep's mute Legions——Infinite
 Their Species——Still more infinite their Shapes,
 Bulks, Movements,—as their various Ways of Life ;
 All diff'rent——till Imagination tires 555
 To note their various Natures ! Can it be,
 That he, who fill'd each crouded Element
 With unressembling Sons of endless Change—
 Peopled each Drop of World with varied States—
 Each Leaf with new-shap'd Nations numberless, 560
 Minims of Substance, evanescent Forms,
 That shun Perception's microscopic Sight
 Thro' infinite Divisibility,
 Affecting pointless Nothing, to escape
 Distinction's Line, yet each preserving sure 565
 Its

Its destin'd Form ;—that HE who veil'd each Path
 To Heav'n's blue Lawns with shadowy Clouds, that shift
 Deception's Distance, changing still the Scene
 Magnificently new,—attemp'ring Lights,
 That teach the Sun's too fervid Beam to break 570
 In coloury Rays, and touch the Sight more safe : —
 —Can it be possible that HE ! pleas'd Pow'r !
 Who o'er Creation's Glebe sow'd Seeds of Change,
 Shou'd but from UNITY's bare Harvest reap ;
 And burn for Tares those beauteous Growths he rais'd,
 To smile in lov'd VARIETY ! O Pride ! 576
 Rank Pride, and Dullness of assuming Man !
 No.—Let me always with pure Love adore
 Him ONE, Creator of unnumber'd Worlds—
 Perpetual Source of Life in endless Forms, 580

(568.) The Perception of Distance comes by Use from the Intervention of Objects. A Line extended from the Eye wou'd suggest no Perception of Distance. The Disposition of the Clouds in this Respect is very wonderful, as well as in tempering and varying by different Reflexions the Rays of Light which otherwise wou'd be too bright for the Sight, and too uniform to produce that infinite Variety of beautiful Appearances, which continually adorn the Sky. I think it is Mr. RICHARDSON, who in his Essay on PAINTING, says, " the Prospect of the Sky alone is a Counterbalance to half the Evils of Life : " and Sir W. TEMPLE, " that a fine Day " is the greatest of all sensual Pleasures."

(577, &c.) This Error of Zealots, by which they pretend the Glory of GOD is advanced, when they wou'd compel Belief of their own artificial and chimerical CREEDS, can only happen when PRIDE is mistaken for Religion (see L. 173.) or as another great Poet well expresses it,

" When HELL is built on SPITE and HEAV'N on PRIDE."

And

And sure Succession of revolving Change,
 Combin'd in UNIFORM VARIETY—

ALL

(581, &c.) We see UNIFORMITY amidst VARIETY display'd in every Part of NATURE. From the former, REASON acquires Assurance; and the latter, by exciting Curiosity and Admiration, becomes a perpetual Source of Knowledge and Satisfaction; while by the continual Power of Both, co-operating with the Mind, we gain insensibly an immediate, and as it were intuitive Knowledge of DEITY, who thus by a marvelous Connexion reveals himself in his Works. From this Instinct of a FIRST CAUSE, Almighty, Wise, and Good, arises that Noble and Original ENTHUSIASM, which, being imperfectly understood, has produced various Effects, according to the Prévalence of those three Qualities, or Attributes, of which it is composed. When in the Imagination Power alone prevail'd, the Impression produced Dread, Horror, and Superstition; when Wisdom, it excited thro' Weakness of Imitation, Craft, Artifice, and Imposture; and when the Notion of Goodness was most predominant in the Mind, it raised Hope, Love, Presumption, and Fanaticism. Most commonly a Mixture of all These together wou'd be the Effect of this INSTINCT, whose blended Operations wou'd produce all those various Forms and Revolutions of Religion, which in the Course of Ages have appear'd in the World; but when at last it becomes the Object of Reason, and is recognis'd and regulated by a just View of NATURE, it then discovers the Source and Origin, and becomes the Rule, and Measure of all Truth and Virtue, and of all LAW and RELIGION. It may be truly called the PRIME PHILOSOPHY; or That to which all LAW and Religion, as to their first Principles, must be reduced. It hath been called LIGHT, * VISION, † WORD,

* ΦΩΣ.

† Ανοψια.

‡ ΛΟΓΟΣ.

ineffable.

(III)

ALL lovely, because made by HIM ! MAN most——
Ev'n when most mistaking,——Joyful see
His Goodness in his various Works display'd, 585
And fearless trust his mild paternal Pow'r.
I live but by his Mercy, and want Weight
To justify his Anger. If I rush

Against

ineffable, and impossible to be revealed *. And tho' in ancient Times, while Reason was in a State of Infancy, it seems to have been scarce recognis'd ev'n by those great Genii, who assum'd the Office of Legislators, and effected an immediate Intercourse, and Communication with DEITY; yet in the Progression of Reason, as NATURE is more minutely explored, and new Scenes of Order, Wisdom and Goodness are discovered, this *first* Principle of TRUTH is more clearly seen and acknowledg'd; which affords ev'en a Probable Expectation, that at last ALL MANKIND shall be partakers of this great Universal LIGHT, or REASON, when the Darkness of Error, Superstition and BIGOTRY shall be dissipated, and in the Language of MOSES, when, " ALL THE LORD'S PEOPLE SHALL BE PROPHETS.

(588.) We may apply, perhaps, with equal Propriety, and ev'n with more Force to this INSTINCT or NATURAL ENTHUSIASM the Observation of a great Critic, concerning the LOVE of ELOQUENCE, which in his Time, it seems, thro' the Ardour of Youth and Inexperience, was noted sometimes to be excessive. *ἐπιτοῦνται γὰρ ἀπαντα ΝΕΟΤ ψυχῆς — ΑΛΟΓΟΤΕ ΤΙΝΑΣ, καὶ ὡς περ ΕΝΘΟΥΣΙΑΣΜΟΙΣ ἐπὶ τὸν λαμβανέσα ΟΡΜΑΣ †.*

* Εγὼ εἰμι πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον, καὶ ὄν, καὶ ἴσομενον, καὶ οὐδεὶς τὸν ἐμὲν πεπλὸν ἀπεκαλύψεν. Τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν, καὶ ΠΑΤΕΡΑ τῶδε τὸ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ὑρεῖν τε ἔργον, καὶ εὐροντα λεγεῖν εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον. ΠΛΑΤΟ.

† D. HALLICARN. See also those excellent Letters of SHAFTEBURY, which exhibit a pure and genuine Spirit of Christianity. P. 9, 13.

Young

Against pure instinct by his Goodness given
 To guide Man's Choice to Virtue; some sure Fate 590
 From Sufferings adequate must punish Guilt,
 But how—when—where——HE who decreed can tell.
 If by Mistake on Life's blind Rocks I split,
 There erring Weakness falls, but falling gains
 Strength,

Young Men especially, and They most of all who have this Instinct strongest, and most vivid, by the Deception of Passion are apt to fall into Error, Folly and Vice. They see not yet the ART of NATURE, by which we are all deceiv'd sometimes to our own Good, and always to the general Good. These Deceptions however vanish as REASON improves; when Conscience harmonising with WILL, the Sense and Obligation of VIRTUE becomes more perfect, and Things are seen in their proper Light, and true Proportions. See CHARACTERISTICS, Vol. III. P. 37, 184, 202, &c.

(590, &c.) It is not here intended to be signified, that the Manner, the Time, or Place of Punishment is unknown to all but GOD; he who transgresses the LAW, feels the Punishment, either immediately, as it hurts Conscience, or consequentially, as it produces Effects, which hurt it. And this in the same Manner, (and unless human NATURE be much corrupted) the same Necessity as any Wound, Bruise, or Disease hurts us. The LAW of GOD executes itself. This Place is only intended against those who substituting themselves in Place of GOD, assume a Power of distributing Reward or Punishment, in an arbitrary Manner, without Regard to TRUTH, and the LAW of NATURE.

(594, &c.) In such a Creature as MAN, so complicated and variable, there is need of continual Caution.—The Motto of the wise Man is "CAVENDO." According to the Doctrine of the Stoics, the UNION of the WILL with TRUTH, was express'd by the Word CONSTANCY. By WILL, they meant rational Desire;

Strength, by Experience taught to stand more firm; 595
And needs no Pardon, for it meant no Wrong.

If

Desire ; by CAUTION, rational Aversion. These were those EUPATHIES, or RIGHT FEELINGS, which include all the NATURAL REFLECTIONS, and having TRUTH for their Foundation, were permanent and constant. And thus the WILL and CONSCIENCE harmonizing with NATURE, produced that perfect RESIGNATION to the WILL of GOD, which is the supreme Good and Happiness of Man. Whether this CONSTANCY, and perfect RESIGNATION doth not exceed the Power of the most happy Genius, especially in some dark Intervals, is more than I pretend to know, or dare affirm. The AIM however is certainly right ; but there is need of continual CAUTION, and above all things to avoid too much AFFECTATION and SECURITY. Without this Caution, natural ENTHUSIASM is apt to run into PRIDE and PRESUMPTION, and either produces that high Species of FANATICISM, whose Effects are too irregular, and often dangerous, or into a State of rapturous INDOLENCE, and inactive QUIETISM. At present, indeed, the Genius of the Age seems little liable to these Disorders ; the Current seems to set another Way, and we are running into a contrary Extreme, of Selfishness, Sensuality, and unmanly Vanities. Virtue is always best when it aims not to exceed the bounds of Nature ; but when ev'n the Aim falls below that Mark, the Practice must be proportionably wrong. We have been so long influenc'd by the Chimeras of Superstition to direct our Aim at something above NATURE, that it is no Wonder if in Practice we fall below it. 'Tis hard to keep the middle Point. In this there seems to be too much Simplicity, too much Gravity, and ev'n too much Severity. All these are disagreeable ; but they are only so, because we are not early accusom'd to them ; or because, when we were accusom'd to them, we found them connected with inconsistent CREEDS, which violated Reason, and with Visions of

H

Happiness,

If thro' the rolling Tide and driving Storm,
Or gently wafted by more fav'ring Gales,

My

Happiness, which disappointed Expectation. So a Fondness for Trifles succeeds a Fondness for Chimæras; and the meer Trifle is certainly better than the solemn Trifle. In common Life many things seem grievous by our own Fault, many by the Fault of others; all which Grievances are either caused or promoted by Superstition, and then falsely attributed to a Corruption of Nature. For these Evils we seek a Remedy in vain from Superstition. It increases the Complaint. The Managers of that Craft are either too vain to be sincere, or too selfish to be trusted. They absurdly pretend to guide without seeing, to teach without feeling, to persuade without Kindness, to exhort without Authority, and to damn without Justice. The Doctors of this Craft shew Heav'n to their Followers with a certain Insolence and Caprice, as Children shew their Gewgaws, only to set the simple a longing, and to amaze them with the sole Power and Privilege, which they pretend to have, of opening or shutting those EVER-LASTING GATES. That Moment, that awful Moment of DEATH,* they watch with a spiteful Diligence, to traverse the natural Progression of the Mind, which at THAT Time especially seems by a certain Necessity to fix, and settle in perfect RESIGNATION to DEITY. How cruel must be the Practice of those solemn Impostors, who on their own Terms, and in their own FORMS of Belief, expose Heav'n and Hell, and give, or take away at Pleasure, the PEACE of GOD!

* Besides the Cruelties inflicted on the *Americans*, described afterwards, and for which (otherwise hardly credible) we have the Testimony of a *Spanish* Bishop; the present Practice of the *French* Clergy is here hinted, who refuse the Sacrament to those who die without signing a certain CREED, or Confession of FAITH.

while

My little Bark gains safe the destin'd Port ;
 Gladly I feel, and own th' almighty Pow'r, 600
 That leads me wand'ring through the trackless Deep.
 Doubt

while the helpless Patient, with equal Pain assents without Conviction, or rejects with threatn'd Damnation ! This Point of View, in which BIGOTRY is seen in its utmost Malignity, wou'd deserve to be drawn by the Hand of a M. ANGELO, or of a DANTE. One wou'd hope indeed this Subject cou'd never be realis'd in fact ; but the Case is otherwise. It was usual with those, who first conquer'd and converted the INDIANS of AMERICA, to hunt those harmless People with Dogs, when they hid themselves from their Conquerors, and rejected, it seems, their Doctrine of Salvation. One of their Kings, or Caciques, had already delivered all his Gold to these divine Missionaries ; who, yet, on pretence that he concealed some of that precious Metal, tied him to a Tree, tore his Body with Dogs, and surrounded him with Fagots, like one who suffers by the Sentence of the INQUISITION. Then, before the Fire was kindled, the holy Priest with Heav'n in his Mouth, and his GOD in his Hand, sanctifies this dreadful Scene of impious Cruelty.

The PRIEST AND THE INDIAN.

TIED to a Tree the fearless INDIAN stood,
 While Dogs devour'd his Limbs, and drank his Blood.
 The solemn PRIEST his gracious Aid apply'd ;

P. " TURN, and adore thy GOD here CRUCIFY'D "——
 " If not ; the Fire shall burn what Dogs have left :
 " TURN, and receive with Joy the proffer'd Gift.——
 " If GRACE thou yet reject,——Then hear thy Doom !——
 " The Dogs of HELL for ever shall consume,
 " And Fire Eternal shall for ever burn
 " Thy stubborn Heart with ceaseless Rage !——O TURN !

Doubt all CREEDS boldly then, but that alone
Which still reserves the SECRET THINGS to GOD,
To MAN leaves VIRTUE, LOYALTY and TRUTH.
Appendant to no Pride mis-rob'd like Zeal

605
Hope

" TURN ! and thro' FAITH ETERNAL LIFE receive. —

I. " You promise vainly what you cannot give.

" Your GOD was CRUCIFY'D ! his Fate I mourn :

" You threaten Fire ! with ME then let him burn ; —

" The Life My GOD bestow'd, you now destroy !

" And how can you restore that Life to Joy ?"

P. " In HEAV'N ETERNAL LIFE to Us is giv'n."

I. " Do CHRISTIANS then pretend to go to HEAV'N ?

" THAT HEAV'N I SCORN !" the guiltless CHIEF reply'd :

" Light, Light the FIRE !" then turn'd his Head, and dy'd !

This was the fatal Effect of BIGOTRY and SUPERSTITION
in these happy Climates ; or as our Poet before characterises it
at l. 220.

" Of Missionary RAPINE'S HOLY ZEAL."

(602.) We may therefore safely doubt the Truth of all
artificial CREEDS, which pretend to divide, determine, or de-
scribe the incomprehensible NATURE of GOD. And tho' it
is often suggested, that the civil Magistrate may contribute
much to the Advancement of VIRTUE, by supporting the Au-
thority of such CREEDS, and by executing the Vengeance of
BIGOTS on those who reject that Authority, 'tis certain, how-
ever, that this Power extends only, and in this Case can avail
only, to protect Innocence and Virtue, by restraining BIGOTS
of every sort from Violence and persecution, without favour or
partiality to any particular CREED, or System of Belief what-
soever. Hence social Happiness wou'd acquire strength and
security : The COMMON BOND, or CHARM of UNION wou'd
be seen, and felt in the " Intercourse of Minds, the free Use
" of REASON, and the mutual Exercise of Love and Friendship."

(616-17.)

Hope all Men blest'd alike—and injure none.
 —Grateful I trace clear Reason's gentle Light,
 Unenvying the intolerable Blaze,
 Which burns the boastful Zealot's stubbly Faith.
 Aw'd with Conviction of Man's reachless Pow'r 610
 To pierce Omnipotence, and view it near,
 Let me with distant Rev'ence pondering read,
 In Silence his permissive Will, and dread
 The arrogance of judging.—Hate no Man
 Erroneous, if sincere; but closing calm 615
 Opinion's dazzled Eye, revere what is,
 Undaring to describe it. Let no Pomp
 Of positive Presumption swell my Soul
 To self-preferring Scorn of alien Creeds

(616-17.) ————— “ Revere what is,
 “ Undaring to describe it.”

This may either signify a Reverence for the SUPREME BEING
 which produces FAITH, LOYALTY, or ALLEGIANCE, and re-
 strains that impious Arrogance and Presumption, which prompts
 the BIGOT to explain the WILL of GOD according to his
 OWN MERE WILL, and without regard to that great and conti-
 nual Revelation of DEITY, made by himself in his WORKS, and
 exhibited in that Order, Beauty and Constancy of Things, which
 we call the WORLD: or it may signify those Works themselves,
 as containing the whole Sum of his PROVIDENCE; of which,
 though we are unable to comprehend, or describe the whole, yet
 by a sober and careful Search, REASON advances in an endless
 Progression of Improvement, and by the same Steps, TRUTH,
 VIRTUE and HAPPINESS are promoted.

ALL

Uncertain in my own ; yet sure of This, 620
That VIRTUE cannot err, but Judgment may.

Peacefully patient thus I travel down
Life's unoffending Journey. Mark well pleas'd
New Prospects, Manners, Tastes, Beliefs, chang'd Modes,
New Systems,——Ev'ry View that sides my Way, 625
Unprejudic'd to any—Bear, forbear,
Serve, and reserve, unwearied. Till full Time

Shall

(621.) In the mean Time, if in this Search, we should at any Time be mistaken, of this, however, we may be sure, that VIRTUE will always be right. In the Exercise of REASON there seem to be various Degrees of ABILITY, many Opportunities of Improvement in some, and in others, many invincible Obstructions: In the Practice of VIRTUE, the ABILITY seems more equal, and the Opportunities and Obstructions, in different States and Conditions of Life, seem to ballance each other. This is indeed a comfortable Consideration, which cannot fail to make us submit, not only patiently, but even joyfully, to the wise and good Order of PROVIDENCE ; when we reflect, “ that no “ external Circumstances of Fortune no involuntary Disadvantages, can exclude any Mortal from the greatest Degree of “ VIRTUE and HAPPINESS.” (See on this Subject HUTCHESON.)

(622.) Thus Peace of Mind is established amidst all that Confusion, and Discord, which the mad Zeal of CREED-MAKERS, and the blind Zeal of CREED-BELIEVERS, have introduced into Religion

(627.) And thus also we are station'd again in that PRIME PHILOSOPHY, and in that wide Field of COMMON TRUTH and NATURE, as it originally lay open, before it was inclosed with the thorny Hedges of artificial SCIENCE ; or, as our Poet says (l. 71.) before the Pride of Man

“ Hedge

Shall open TRUTH's barr'd Gate, and we shall see
GOD's certain Meaning in his own clear LIGHT. 629

“Hedg'd in th' ETERNAL's COMMON.”

To this at last all Disputes must be referred concerning VIRTUE, TRUTH, and LAW: and as all Institutions civil or religious, are derived from this Fountain, so when they want amendment and Reformation, to this again they must all be reduced. When therefore we consider this grand Object of UNIVERSAL NATURE; how far a FREE ENQUIRY may extend; how important these Discoveries, which have been made; how many more, and perhaps greater Truths remain yet undiscovered; and lastly how all these most evidently tend to establish VIRTUE and PIETY, and therefore promote the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind; it should seem strange that any should be found, at this Time, and in this Country especially, who would restrain this natural Progression of TRUTH; and much more, that they should vilify the Use of REASON and FREE-THOUGHT as dangerous, and even impious. Yet even among these, we may “see sometimes the profounder Sort of WITS in handling some particular Argument, will now and then draw a Bucket of “Water from this WELL, for their present USE:” But as others of a better Genius and more benevolent Temper, have visited the Spring-head, we may be allowed, perhaps, to examine and compare their different Accounts and Descriptions.

There are two Points of View, in which NATURE, or the WORKS of GOD may be seen or represented.

I. That in the Beginning MAN was created perfect; yet fell from this original State. This FALL was followed by a general Corruption of Manners derived from it, through all succeeding Generations. The Effect, or Consequence extended far; for though at first Man was made immortal, yet now he became both MORTAL and IMMORTAL. He was first doomed to die, and then to live again; yet so as to be miserable for EVER. This doom was irrevocable and unavoidable. Nevertheless a SAVING Method

was

was at last discovered, which even from the beginning was secretly designed, and reserved, as virtually, though not actually efficacious. The Method was THIS; that the SUPREME BEING who MADE MAN, should DIE for MAN; offering his LIEE, or BLOOD, as a SACRIFICE, PROPITIATION, or ATTONEMENT. That MAN by BELIEVING this SACRIFICE was made for him, should again become capable of EVERLASTING HAPPINESS. Thus GOD, by his OWN DEATH, satisfied his OWN JUSTICE; and MAN became HOLY by the RIGHTEOUSNESS of GOD IMPUTED. This is called REDEMPTION. Nevertheless, as some report the Case, everlasting Happiness still rests on a very precarious Foundation; since Man, besides BELIEVING WELL, must LIVE WELL: which is the only Circumstance, in this TRAGEDY which seems to be founded in NATURE. Others affirm this Circumstance of LIVING WELL is unnecessary, and that BELIEF alone is sufficient; while ALL agree that without such BELIEF VIRTUE is useless, SALVATION impossible, and that ALL MANKIND yet remain under the CURSE, and subject to ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

2. According to the other Description, MAN was ORIGINALLY, as NOW, formed IMPERFECT. TIME, Opportunity, Experience, and a right Use of all these are necessary to unfold the NATURE of THINGS, the LAW of GOD, and the Means of HAPPINESS. Many are the Efforts of REASON in such a Creature, in such a State, blended as it is with APPETITE and PASSION, and while it grows from SENSE, confined and incumbered with it. Till at last, by a NATURAL PROGRESSION it arrives at MATURITY, sees Things in a full and clear Light, and in their true Proportions; yet sees at the same Time, that ALL CANNOT BE SEEN, but that Room is left for continual IMPROVEMENT in an endless Progression.

In this SCHEME the great WORK, with all its Movements, is progressive and NATURAL; in the other RETROGRADE; resembling those CYCLES and EPICYCLES of the Planets, by which the harmonious Simplicity, and Proportion of their Motions, were perplexed and intricated. It seems indeed to be a mere artificial,

artificial, or scenical Representation; which being SUPERNATURAL, or out of the Bounds of NATURE, and full of the false MARVELOUS, is therefore very well fitted to excite and establish IMPLICIT FAITH; which exacts more Pains to overlook, and despise, than would be necessary to see, and recognize the REAL WORKS and MIRACLES of NATURE. It is therefore no way adapted to promote the KNOWLEDGE of TRUTH, the Love of VIRTUE, the HAPPINESS of MAN, or the GLORY of GOD. On the Contrary it is adapted to promote, and in Fact ALWAYS hath promoted, ERROR and VICE, with all the consequential Evils of BIGOTRY and Superstition. Yet even to This, which is now at last become in reality a general Corruption, a wise and good Man might submit with Patience, if omitting the usual Methods of Compulsion, and Provocation, Belief were only recommended in the more easy Way of Persuasion, and free Manner of Invitation: While he might be allow'd to smile, perhaps, when in search of TRUTH only, and as a sincere Lover of VIRTUE, he shou'd see so many MYSTERIES REVEALED without being understood, so much Happiness procur'd, without being enjoy'd, and so many BIGOTS, who believe without understanding, yet damn all who do not understand, as well as believe. For my own Part, tho' I have a great and sincere Regard for all Government, in which the good of Mankind is intended, and for our own in particular, the Freedom and Excellence of which I gratefully acknowledge, yet I cannot help thinking that this very Intention of promoting COMMON GOOD is defeated by the means employ'd to effect it; and that our public System, and established Form of Religion, which is consider'd as the first and chiefeft of those Means, doth itself greatly want Amendment and Reformation, that it may approach yet nearer to Truth; and correspond better with the Constitution of NATURE. Whether this be so indeed, and if so, which is the best Way of Effecting such Reformation, I leave entirely to the Judgment of our Governors. Mean Time, as our POET agrees with a noble
Philosopher

Philosopher * in directing the Means of Happiness more according to NATURE, let us follow that Direction, while we repress with equal Diligence, the PRIDE of IGNORANCE and BIGOTRY, of all MONSTERS the most deformed, and the PRIDE of FALSE KNOWLEDGE, of all Vices the most insinuating. " Let us pursue the Journey of Life contentedly ; and " learn that as the softest Pillow, on which we can lay our " Heads, has been said by MONTAIGNE to be IGNORANCE, " we may say more properly, that it is RESIGNATION. He " alone is HAPPY, and HE is truly so, who can say, Welcome " Life, whatever it brings ; welcome DEATH, whatever it is ! " It is the Want of real FAITH, LOYALTY and ALLEGIANCE, which makes us see and feel so much EVIL, while the sober FREE-THINKER, and TRUE BELIEVER, committing himself to the Disposal of GOD, views his WORKS with Reverence and Gratitude, and sees, that ev'n Now, as well as at the BEGINNING, they are ALL VERY GOOD !

* BOBINGBROKE.



F I N I S.

